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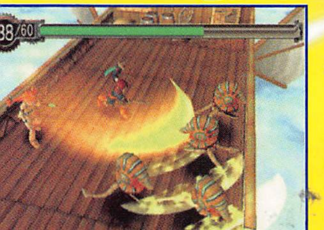


Rayman 2 Lights up the N64!

6 page review plus interview!

Yu Suzuki's F355 Challenge!

Eternal Arcadia: From the makers of Phantasy Star!



Capcom's SPAWN Storms Dreamcast!

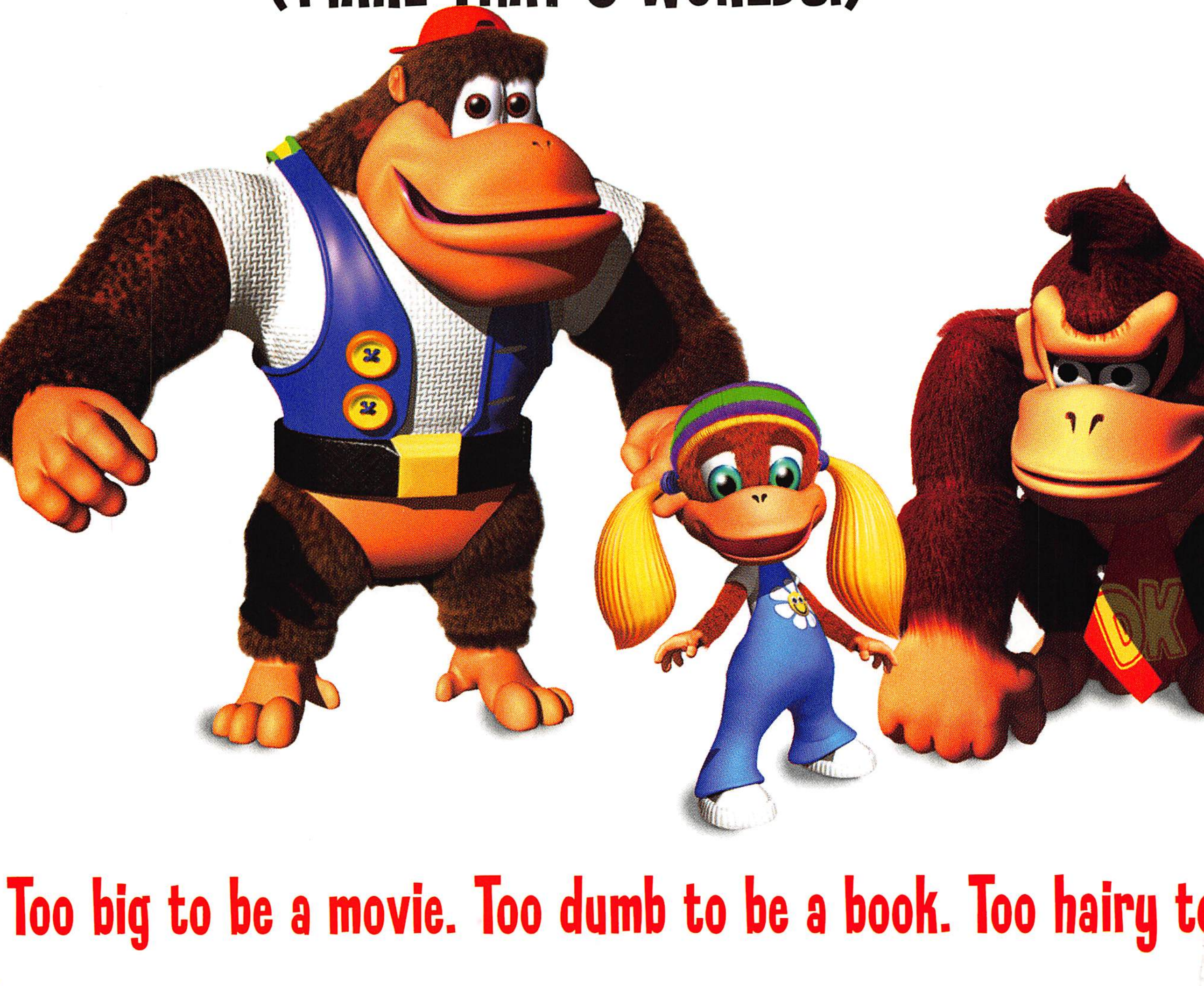
Also Reviewed: Tony Hawk's Pro Skater Dino Crisis and Thousand Arms

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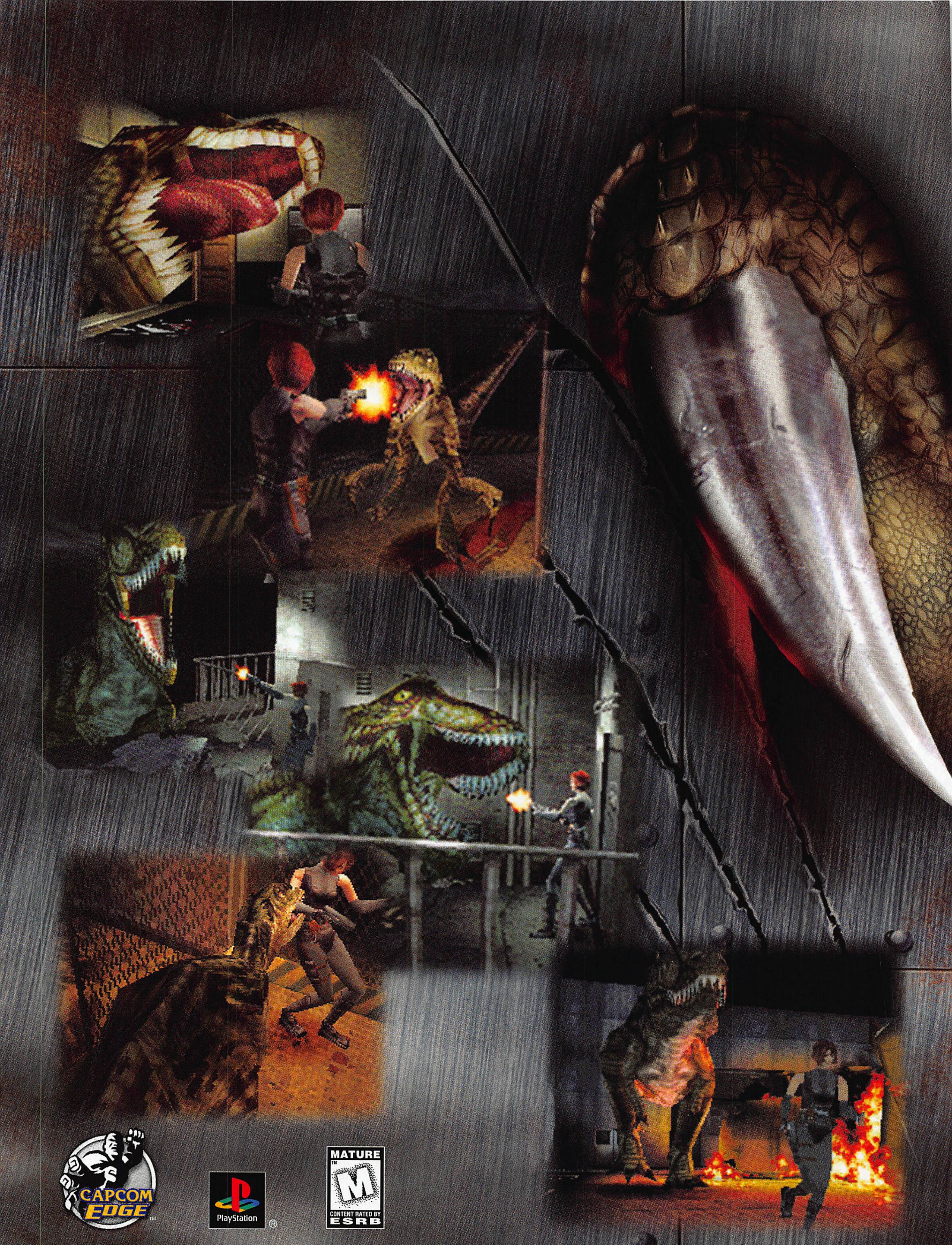




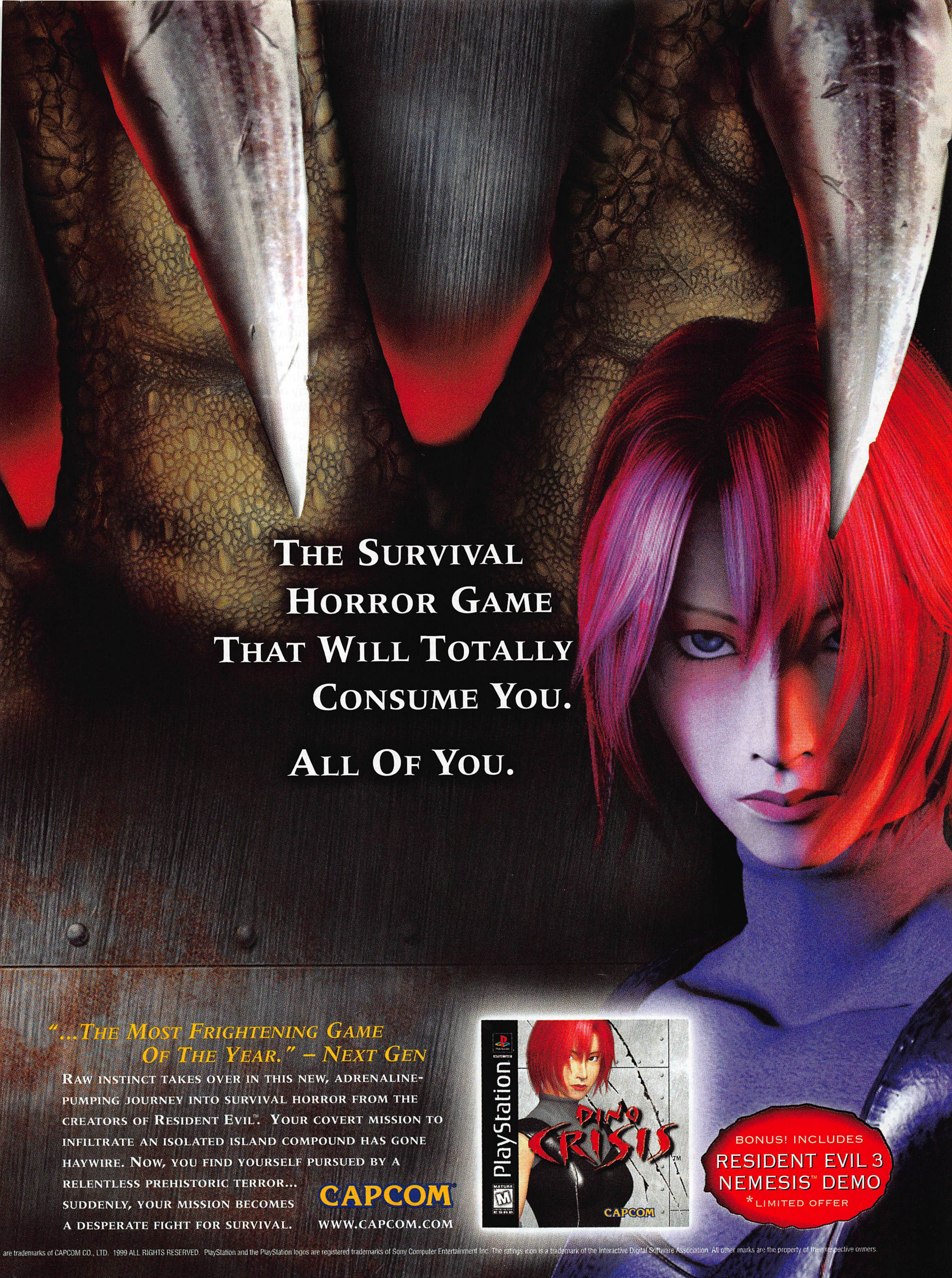
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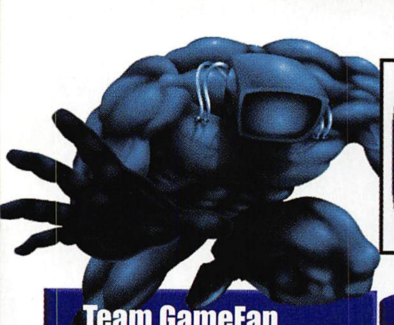
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The "single biggest day in entertainment history" has come and gone and now that you've got your itchy little hands on Sega's newest bit of tech, what's the verdict? Elation? Disappointment? So-so? Whatever the case, it's a testament to video games in general that they've now gone fully mainstream. And the repercussions are that it'll never be the same again.

Gone are the days where gaming was a dark, closeted hobby that only sickly, pasty-skinned, teenage males participated in. Now it's as ubiquitous (ooh, there's that word) as Monday Night Football or heading out on a Friday night to see the latest big movie. In fact, for some of us it's probably a bit disconcerting. After all, we've been doing this for so long now that it seems like "Duh, what was everybody missing all along?" I guess they know now...

The most frightening aspect of all of this, is that even in light of Sega's utterly incredible feat, I wouldn't be surprised if Sony and Nintendo's next machines make even larger splashes (provided they can get into the 'magical' sub-$200 range) when, and if, they make it to the States next year. If cash-strapped Sega was willing to spend a 'mere' $100 million on the US launch, think of what companies with half as much cash-on-hand as Bill Gates could do (Sony could make the staggering $300 million Intel spent on pushing the Pentium 3 processor look like chump-change).

Another nice side-effect of all this Dreamcast-mania, is that it goes a long way in showing that America is the single most important market for game developers and publishers in the world. While Japan may still lead us in number of big-selling titles, it's become completely apparent that a game can no longer go into production (outside of the *Tokimeki*s of the world) without at least thinking about a potential move across the Pacific. Gives me a nice, warm fuzzy feeling to know that we're the center of the gaming universe (hey, where there's money...).

And before the otaku out there get up-in-arms over that last statement: Relax guys (and girls), and just let that sink in for a moment. If nothing else, this means that we'll more than likely get more of those 'cool' Japanese titles than we otherwise would have. As is the case with movies, comic books, and any other form of entertainment, there is always a decent niche audience for just about anything once something is perceived as being mass market (again, the obvious money-factor). So while you may bemoan the 'lamers,' just know that they're going to (however indirectly) help **you** get what ya want in the end. We'll know that gaming's gone completely mainstream when people stop whining about the acute lack of dating sims and cat-raising sims in the States...I can't wait, <urgh>.

Which brings up another point: Girls (or shall I be PC and say women) are playing games in record numbers as well. Thanks to a totally un-scientific study involving a single unnamed software store in our local mall (surprisingly staffed by, amazingly, a female), it's clear that girl-gamers are finally something to take note of, instead of wiling away non-gaming hours day-dreaming, "if only I could find a girl that likes to play games..." (and now you can quit dreaming, Romeo — even though she plays games now, she still won't give you the time of day...I'm talkin' to you Shidoshi). While Johnny shouldn't worry about losing the title of video game geek to Jenny, it may be time to finally realize that women are playing more than just *Tetris* these days.

And on a parting note, I'd just like to thank our legion of loyal fans for keeping us in their thoughts each and every month even after all the craziness we've been through over the past two years. Thanks to you, GameFan magazine and GameFan Online (www.gamefan.com) are poised to become the premier source of news, reviews and information on the entire spectrum of interactive entertainment (the marketing guys made me say that last bit). From the whole team, deep inside Woodland Hills, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts—we couldn't have made it without you.

Editorial Director
Eric Mylonas

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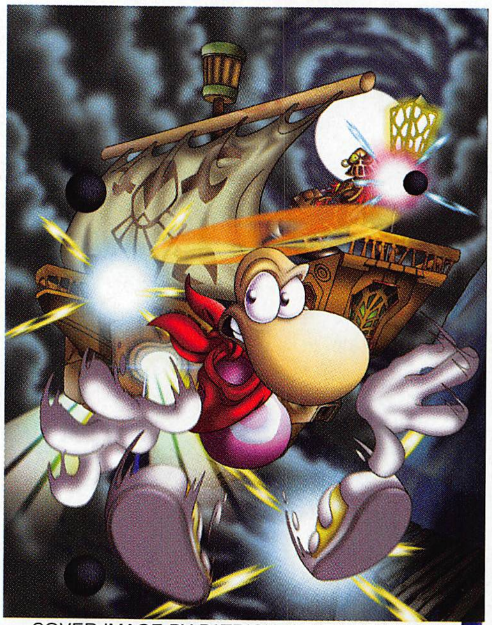
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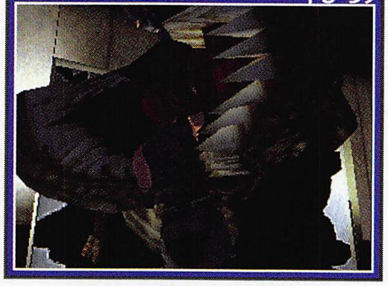


COVER IMAGE BY PATRICK "SPAZ!" SPAZIANTE

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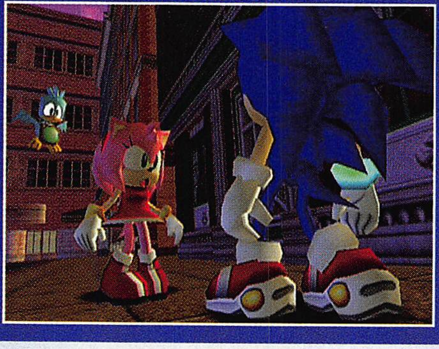

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TOP TEN MOST WANTED

November 1999

Sonic Adventure

Publisher: Sega



Reader's Top Ten

1) *Sonic Adventure* - DC
2) *Soul Calibur* - DC
3) *Final Fantasy VIII* - PS
4) *Street Fighter Alpha 3* - PS
5) *Power Stone* - DC
6) *Lunar: SSS Complete* - PS
7) *Mario Golf* - N64
8) *Star Ocean: 2nd Story* - PS
9) *WWF Attitude* - N64
10) *Metal Gear Solid* - PS

Reader's Most Wanted

1) *RE: Code Veronica* - DC
2) *Dino Crisis* - PS
3) *Perfect Dark* - N64
4) *SNK vs. Capcom* - Arcade
5) *Shen Mue* - DC
6) *Dino Crisis* - PS
7) *Thousand Arms* - PS
8) *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* - PS
9) *Climax Landers* - DC
10) *Legend of Mana* - PS

GAMEFAN EDITORS' TOP TEN

*IMPORT TITLE



1) *Rayman 2* - N64
2) *Grandia* - PS
3) *Monster Rancher 2* - PS
4) *Tony Hawk Pro Skater* - PS
5) *Power Stone* - DC
6) *Sonic Adventure* - DC
7) *Tempest 2000* - Jaguar
8) *Target Earth* - Genesis
9) *Cybernator* - SNES
10) *Super Metroid* - SNES



1) *Virtual On 2 v5.4* - Arcade
2) *Biomotor Unitron** - NGP
3) *Soul Calibur* - DC
4) *Wrestlemania 2000* - N64
5) *F355 Challenge* - Arcade
6) *Silent Scope* - Arcade
7) *SF3: Third Strike* - Arcade
8) *NFL 2000* - DC
9) *KoF '99: Millenium* - Arcade
10) *Final Fantasy II* - SNES



1) *Crash Team Racing* - PS
2) *Gran Turismo 2** - PS
3) *Wipeout 3* - PS
4) *Trick Style* - DC
5) *Silent Scope* - Arcade
6) *Guitar Freaks** - PS
7) *SF EX 2 Plus* - Arcade
8) *Dino Crisis* - PS
9) *Power Stone* - DC
10) *Rabbit Punch* - Arcade



1) *Rayman 2* - N64
2) *Thousand Arms* - PS
3) *Monster Rancher 2* - PS
4) *Final Fantasy VIII* - PS
5) *Soul Calibur* - DC
6) *Brave Firefighters* - Arcade
7) *Phantom Menace* - Pinball
8) *Raku Gaki Showtime** - PS
9) *Guitar Freaks** - PS
10) *Jumpman* - C64



1) *F355 Challenge* - Arcade
2) *Zombie Revenge* - DC
3) *Soul Calibur* - DC
4) *BattleTanx II* - N64
5) *Sega Rally 2* - DC
6) *Raku Gaki Showtime** - PS
7) *SF Zero 3** - SS
8) *House of the Dead 2* - DC
9) *Tokyo Extreme Racer* - DC
10) *Test Drive Le Mans* - PS



1) *EverQuest* - PC
2) *Monster Rancher 2* - PS
3) *NHL FaceOff 2000* - PS
4) *C&C Tiberian Sun* - PC
5) *NFL 2K* - DC
6) *Zombie Revenge* - DC
7) *V8: 2nd Offense* - DC
8) *Madden 2000* - N64
9) *Bass Landing* - PS
10) *Drakan* - PC

WIN

THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!

All you have to do to enter the drawing is write down a list of your top 10 favorite games and the 10 games you want the most that aren't out yet, on a piece of paper or a postcard then send them to: GAMEFAN TOP TEN, 6301 DeSoto Ave., Suite E, Woodland Hills, CA 91367

First Prize: GameBoy Color

Second Prize: Your choice of one of the Picks of the Month in Viewpoint.

Third Prize: A FREE year of GameFan! The best magazine in the universe!

Congratulations to last month's winners:

First Prize:	Second Prize:	Third Prize:
George Remal	Travis Lerma	Enson Chen
Ridgeway, VA	Palatine, IL	Belmont, CA

Drawing is limited to One (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 21st of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified by mail and listed on this page. For a complete list of rules and regulations write: GameFan Top Ten with self-addressed & stamped envelope.

Developer's Top Ten

This Month's Guest: **Pauline Jacquey**
Producer, Rayman 2, Ubi Soft

1. *Mario Kart* - SNES
2. *Tekken 3* - PS
3. *Quake 2* - PC
4. *Abe's Oddysee* - PS
5. *Iba* - PS
6. *Power Stone* - DC
7. *Days of the Tentacle* - PC
8. *Syndicate* - PC
9. *Parappa the Rapper* - PS
10. *Int. Track & Field* - Arcade

Mario Kart



Publisher: Nintendo



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EDITOR ROUNDUP

Last month we discussed the "responsibilities" of every member on staff here at *GameFan*. But have you ever wondered what we'd be doing if we weren't working for the best video game magazine out there? No? Well, we have. Because while every day is a walk in the park, we never know what tomorrow brings, this could one day be us... <shudder>

ecm@gamefan.com



ECM

What other occupation would possibly give a little man like ECM the opportunity to rant and rave all day, ordering people about in a haughty tone and abusing what little power he actually has? Only one place would be sadistic enough to employ him—the DMV.

cerberus@gamefan.com



CERBERUS

If Cerberus wasn't working at GameFan, he'd wile away the hot summer days having an actual life unlike the rest of the staff at GF. Maybe pick up a sport like soccer again as to not get that pot belly and "love handles" most of the staffers hold so dear.

elnino@gamefan.com



EL NINO

El Niño loves his stats... so much so that he'd make a fine Las Vegas bookie. And with that much flesh to push around, he could even be the bill collector. Either that, or he'd be selling Chiclets just south of the border. After all, he needs some way to support his raging *EQ* habit.

eggo@gamefan.com



EGGO

If he weren't working at GF, Eggo would probably still be losing badly to all comers at *Street Fighter X: Turbo Alpha Strike* in an obscure LA arcade. But it's much more likely that he'd be 'slumming' in the Internet chatroom #bored & married. "Hey, baby, feelin' lonely tonight?"

dangohead@gamefan.com



DANGOHEAD

If not for *GameFan*, Dangohead would still be testing games at Sega, playing them over and over into the wee hours of the morning, or until his head exploded. 'Quality' titles like *X-perts*, *Nightmare Circus*, and *The Ooze*.



THE 6th MAN

Assuming he wasn't living up to his name on some NBA team (hey, we hear the Warriors are lookin' for a warm body or two), the 6th Man would be overworked and underpaid in any of our country's fine public education facilities... yup, he'd be a high school math teacher.



THE ART DEPARTMENT

reubus@gamefan.com

Under Construction

REUBUS

Assuming a diet of cigarettes and Pepsi hadn't done him in, Reubus would be stationed in a North Dakota Naval Reserve Office, regaling potential recruits with tales of, uh, N. Dakota and his "Navy days."

waka@gamefan.com

Under Construction

WAKA

Without a job at *GameFan* getting in the way, Waka's unchecked rise to immortality in the world of Norrath would be complete... though it's not like his job is getting in the way of that now—just ask Tao ↓

tao@gamefan.com

Under Construction

TAO

Overworked and under-appreciated, Tao's lot in life is the way of the low man on the totem pole— unable to use *EverQuest* as an excuse to slack, he'd be relegated to life as an NFL kicker— always a bridesmaid, never a bride.

PRODUCTIVITY KILLER OF THE MONTH



Wrestlemania 2K

Height: 4.81 in
Weight: 1.27 lb
Blood Type: A
Special Abilities: The Dango's Elbow

When Dangohead first started playing this game, we gave him a sound ribbing for it. After all, when was the last time a hard-core gamer enjoyed playing a wrestling game? *WWF Superstars* in arcades?

So imagine our surprise when he continued to play this game, hour after hour. We would just shake our heads in disbelief every time we walked by. "You're STILL playing this game?" we asked.

But then we stopped and started paying attention to what he was doing... creating players based on our characters. Then, he would organize 2 on 2 matches and let the computer AI handle the rest.

Who wouldn't want to see Eggo cheapshot El Niño with a solid groin shot, complete with "Ding!" sound effect. Or would you rather see Dangohead perform The Dango's Elbow on our beloved ECM? (of course ECM is also quick to point out that "this IS just a video game, and he could never do that in real life...").

Needless to say, we found countless hours of enjoyment in watching our likenesses parade around the ring beating each other up. Course, we always did wonder, "Hey, Dangohead! Why does your character keep winning? Hmm..."

This month in GameFan's BOX-O-FUN!

Japanese 101: 5 Credits — Prof. Seaman



Imagine our surprise when we returned from a long Labor Day weekend to discover that Waka's budding, young Seaman had taught his Furby quite a bit of Japanese. Helpful phrases like 'Konichiwa' and 'Ohayo Gozaimasu' had been passed on to that poor Furby.

And what did the Furby give back to Seaman? 'Colorful' phrases learned from vocal staff members like ECM. Now, Waka's poor Seaman has grown up to be a foul-mouthed, degenerate seaman, in every sense of the word.

Sadly, the once magnificent Seaman now spends his days in the "writers' corral" barking phrases like, "Get ta work, ya bunch of @!#* monkeys" and "You're fired! Put your @!#* in a box."

As for the Furby, he, like the rest of his ill-conceived ilk, was banished to the realm of obscurity with other short-lived fads such as Tamagotchi, Elmo, and Nick Rox.

CHICKEN OF THE MONTH

UmJammer Lammy Guitar

When we first heard Sony was bringing *Parappa the Rapper* to the States, we were thrilled. When we heard *UmJammer Lammy* (the sequel to *Parappa*) was coming as well, we were ecstatic. Then when we heard Sony was throwing an *UmJammer Lammy* launch party, complete with a live concert by Milkcan, we went nuts.

So while a couple of our editors were off carousing in New York at the *UmJammer* party, those of us left behind were pleasantly surprised to see this puppy land on the cave doorstep: the UmJammer Lammy guitar! Thanks Sony, for this Super Chicken, which came totally unexpected. Fueled by the mighty power of a 9-volt battery, this guitar sounds awesome... that is, until Cerberus started playing it... or trying to. For a day and a half, it was nearly impossible to work because of the piercing wail of this electric guitar. But as much as we'd like to be rock stars, we are just sausages at heart.

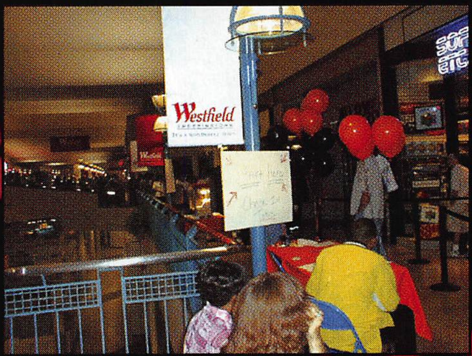


SAUSAGE OF THE MONTH



As we go to print, we had to mention the line of sausage links waiting patiently outside the Software Etc. in the Fox Hills Mall in Southern California. The line began forming around 8:45 PM on September 8th, with many a hard-core gamer waiting for midnight to strike, so they could be among the first to own Sega's console wonder. The store boasted the largest number of pre-ordered Dreamcasts of any retailer in the nation (according to the spokesperson we talked with) — over 800.

Though it's a bit hard to see from the picture, the sausage trail went back around a corner or two. There were so many people on hand (around 400) that the store had plans to stay open all night. Sausage supreme!

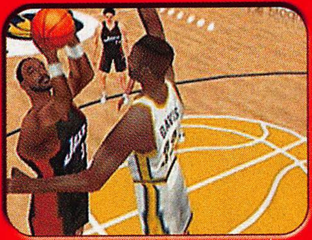




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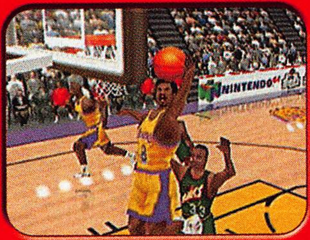
NBA COURTSIDE 2
Featuring KOBE BRYANT



Steal his moves or start



from scratch with the Rookie mode



where all it takes to power-up

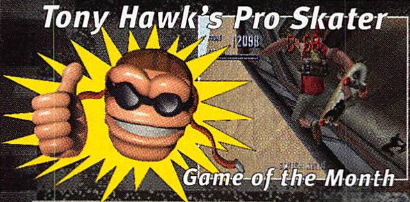


your player is a little practice.

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VIEWPOINT











G — Graphics
C — Control
P — Play Mechanics
M — Music
O — Originality



Dino Crisis
PlayStation
Capcom
Survival Horror



Only Capcom could produce a near carbon-copy of their ultra successful *Resident Evil* game, replace the zombies with dinos and make it work this well! The action is intense, the enemies are ferocious and the gameplay is everything you'd expect from one of the best developers around. I still wish *Dino Crisis* had pre-rendered background as the PlayStation's graphic power appears to be fizzling fast. Hopefully the sequel is DC-bound!

G 8 C 8 P 9 M 8 O 5 — **96**



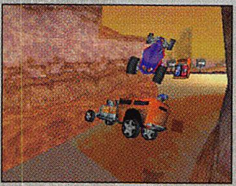
So shoot me, I like *Dino Crisis*. I was always sold on *RE*'s storyline, but not the gameplay—running from zombies ain't my thang. *Dino Crisis* is faster paced and less clichéd than its pre-rendered family. Real-time polygonal backgrounds give *Dino Crisis* a certain authenticity that I don't think *RE* ever had. Why hasn't Capcom changed the archaic control setup? I'm sick of the *RE* scheme. If *Dino Crisis* controlled like *Parasite Eve* it'd be a 95.

G 9 C 6 P 7 M 7 O 7 — **89**



I dunno about you but games like *Resident Evil 3* and *Dino Crisis* (which feels a lot like a *Resident Evil* game to me) have not grown old with me yet. The gameplay's solid throughout, and the graphics and sound are some of the best you'll see on PlayStation. However, I do prefer the pre-rendered backgrounds and zombie theme of *RE* to the polygonal environments and dinosaurs of *DC*. At least the puzzles are better in this game.

G 9 C 7 P 9 M 9 O 8 — **91**



Hot Wheels
PlayStation
Electronic Arts
Racing



Wow, did a lot of racers fall down and bump there widdle heads this month—first up on the chopping block, *Hot Wheels*. A very bare bones engine coupled to some questionable gameplay—what's with the stunts...yuck. Heck, I don't even have the nostalgia factor working in this one (I was too busy playing with real toys). If I want to bust flips and somersaults I'll play a skateboarding game. Yet another wayward racer meets an ugly end.

G 6 C 6 P 6 M 5 O 7 — **67**



I like to think of *Hot Wheels* as the real *SF Rush* for PlayStation. First, the game's got great high-speed physics and secondly, the track designs, being true to the license, will keep you entertained for a long time to come. The introduction of aerial tricks will keep even the savant-style player (read: Dango) interested until all forty-plus cars have been acquired. An original game from EA, believe it or not. I'm impressed.

G 7 C 9 P 9 M 6 O 8 — **88**



Hot Wheels Turbo Racing is a kids game—pure and simple. The graphics are colorful, there's tons of tricks to pull off and the track design is fairly outrageous, but the lack of challenge will surely dissuade an older crowd. Personally I was more of a Matchbox fan as a kid, but hey, you got to take what you can get. Hmmm, I wonder who owns those rights? Hey, EA, I got a great idea for a game and we can use the *Hot Wheels* engine...

G 6 C 7 P 6 M 5 O 9 — **70**



ReVolt
PlayStation
Acclaim
Racing



Well, well <cracking knuckles> what do we have here—a subpar version of a game I didn't like last month. What's going on, little guy? Looks like you got lost on the way to the good graphics/any gameplay path...let's have a nice little chat, you and me. See, games like you tried hard but in the end, well, ya came up just a bit short. Tell ya what, you just close your eyes and I'll make this real quick and painless...but first let's chat with my friends over here ➤

G 5 C 5 P 5 M 7 O 7 — **48**



What happened? I'm supposed to like this game. The Nintendo 64 version was decent enough—playable, too. Did development of its PlayStation counterpart stop in Alpha stages? The frame rate renders the game unplayable; the draw-in distance is putrid. I'm really bummed that *ReVolt* is such a dog on the PlayStation. CD techno-rave music is very good, but that's all I can think of that I like about this *ReVolt*. I must go cry...

G 6 C 7 P 6 M 10 O 7 — **50**



I didn't like this game last month, and now that it loads, I like it even less. When more than one car fills the screen, the frame-rate chokes and sputters! Especially since *Hot Wheels Racing* for PS is out this month, there's really no reason to buy this game. *HWR* is the better 'fun racer' because it one-ups this game in all categories: fun, frame-rate, engine, and music. At least *Re-Volt* has some decent techno music, but not much else.

G 5 C 6 P 6 M 8 O 8 — **59**



Thousand Arms
PlayStation
Atlus
Role-Playing



PC Engine goes PlayStation! If you're like me and you lust after the good ol' days of wacky, barely animated cinemas and solid, mostly 2D gameplay of yore, you'll be in love. Sure, dating sims suck, but if you bolt one onto a really solid, really enjoyable (albeit silly) RPG story there's lots to like here. And that's the key—the game never took itself seriously so it didn't get moshed in the translation process! More of this and less *Persona* can only be a good thing, right?

G 9 C 7 P 8 M 8 O 9 — **93**



Everything about *Thousand Arms* reminds me of my days with the TurboGrafx and PC Engine. Some RPGs grow on you over time, not *Thousand Arms*—this one gets addicting fast. The script is may entertaining and gameplay is straight-up fun from the start. Our wayward hero, Meis, has more personality than Squall or Cloud could ever dream of. If you're smart you'll skip the played out *FFVIII* and learn to master magic spells and the art of dating.

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 9 — **90**



If you're an RPG fan the PlayStation is definitely where it's at! Atlus has produced one of the most addicting RPG's I've seen in years... though I expected to be saying that about *FFVIII*—oh, well. The character design is top notch and the graphics are very impressive, although I was hoping for more CG cinemas. The dating simulation is also a plus but very unhealthy for Eggo—he hasn't destroyed a perfectly good marriage in weeks!

G 9 C 7 P 8 M 7 O 8 — **88**



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater
PlayStation
Activision
Skateboarding



Sleeper hit of the year? Oh yes, and much, much more. See, I love skateboarding games: *Skate or Die, 720', Top Skater*—you name it, I played it and loved every minute of it. *Tony Hawk* is the heir apparent to these incredible games, proving that Neversoft is easily among the top PS developers. This is among the last, great PlayStation games and competes head-to-head with everything Sega's mighty Dreamcast has to offer.

G 9 C 9 P 9 M 8 O 9 — **96**



Since the glory days of *720'*, I've been waiting for an awesome action-packed skating game to surface. *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* is definitely as action-packed as they come and utilizing the *Apocalypse* engine, showcases some truly killer graphics. The control is dead-on and breathtaking tricks are a cinch to pull off. The soundtrack also fits the game perfectly featuring the tunes of real alternative bands. Now where's *Gleaming The Cube 2*?

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 8 O 7 — **94**



Believe it or not, I don't really like skateboarding games. *Skate or Die* was the pinnacle and I loved that, but nothing has been as fun since. So, no, I'm not going to sit here frothing at the mouth telling you how this is the second coming of sliced bread, but *THPS* is definitely the best looking skateboarding game out there. It also has tight control, good gameplay, and one of the best engines I've ever seen. Too bad it's a skateboarding game.

G 9 C 9 P 7 M 8 O 8 — **88**



WipeOut is back, and it's got a higher frame-rate, better graphics, more game features, and the expected rockin' techno soundtrack. Unfortunately, I've always considered this just an okay racing series which I never got into... it wasn't the life-changing experience which other gamers made it out to be (you know the type, "I played *WO* for six months straight without taking a shower, and I loved every minute!"). Am I missing something here?

G 7 C 8 P 7 M 9 O 6 **81**



This game is sick! I just can't believe how fast it plays and without even taking away from the graphics, which have been given a pretty decent face lift since *WipeOut XL*. Sadly, I've never gotten that jazzed about this series and am now severely lacking in my ninja *Wipeout* skills. Good thing the game is so amazing since I'm gonna be playing it a lot, or at least till I can blow by Cerberus. And as expected the soundtrack is beyond compare.

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 10 O 6 **90**



I don't get it, and I probably never will. While the rest of the world goes ga-ga over the hover-car-racing antics of *Wipeout* I must sullenly sit on the sidelines. While I can appreciate the stunning graphics and the aural assault proffered here, I just can't get into it; believe me, I've tried. Simply put: another case of graphics leading the charge while gameplay is trampled underfoot. It's back to *Rage Racer* and *F-Zero X* for me, I'm afraid.

G 9 C 7 P 5 M 9 O 6 **75**



Wipeout 3
PlayStation
Psygnosis
Racing



You may remember I didn't like the first *BattleTanx* much. Well, 3DO has made many improvements to the series, because the sequel is faster-paced, more fun, has a better story, and more tanks. Plus, the battle-damaged Snuggles bear had me nearly in tears with laughter. While this isn't a must-own title for the N64, it makes for an amusing rental, because cruising through cities in different tanks is always fun... for a day or two.

G 6 C 6 P 7 M 8 O 8 **80**



I guess you can teach an old dog new tricks. 3DO must've found an arcade with *Tokyo Wars* because, guess what, *Battletanx II* is fun. I didn't get a headache playing through this one either. The best compliment I can give *Battletanx II* is it doesn't look like an N64 game. In short, what I mean is that the graphics in *Battletanx II* don't look blurry or foggy. I was just pleased with its appearance. *Battletanx II* is a blast (no pun intended) to play.

G 8 C 9 P 8 M 7 O 7 **86**



Ah yes, the game with the ultra-rad commercial returns in its first sequel. Not being a huge fan of the first I was prepared to wade through another *Tokyo Wars*-like affair, snoozing most of the way. Imagine my surprise when the game's completely over-the-top action atmosphere actually managed to grab hold for a little while. Sure, it's not the first game I'll be reaching for, but it's a nice improvement over a game I wasn't thrilled with.

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 7 **82**



Battle Tanx II
Nintendo 64
3DO
Tank



DD64 (not the readable/writeable peripheral) is OK, but it suffers from one major problem: There's a damage meter. Instead of keeping track of which side/part of your car is banged up, it's all treated as one unit with an overall damage meter. Doesn't this defeat the purpose of finding strategy in the game? No longer can you work on an enemy's wheel when it's damaged. At least there are many game modes to amuse yourself with...

G 7 C 8 P 6 M 8 O 7 **70**



AAAARGGGGGGHHHH! What has THQ done to my beloved *Destruction Derby*!?! Don't let the name fool you. This isn't the same game we know and love. It's some kind of warped version from a bizarro universe or something. Panel specific damage is gone to be replaced with a horrible damage meter. What's up with that? *Destruction Derby* has always been to ram into opposing cars affecting damaged areas. Now it's a no-brainer. Hand me my PS.

G 5 C 7 P 4 M 5 O 6 **40**



Hey look! Another racing game...yippee. Let me just say that I've never liked the *Destruction Derby* series so the odds that I'd think much of this edition, well, are just about nil. However, while the earlier PS versions had part-specific damage, the somewhat questionable idea of a 'life' bar for your car is a bit inane. Considering that strips every last vestige of strategy from the game, you won't see me lining up to play this again.

G 6 C 7 P 5 M 5 O 6 **64**



Destruction Derby
Nintendo 64
THQ
Car Combat



I must be suffering from some severe fever here folks because my best judgement tells me that nothing this good could have come from France... *Rayman 2* is awesome! Graphically it'll make you wonder why all N64 games aren't this good looking. Unlike the original *Rayman*, the sheer difficulty of the game has been toned down to actually cause the player to want to play to the bitter end—madness! Ubi certainly knows how to mend wounds caused by *Tonic*.

G 9 C 8 P 7 M 6 O 8 **91**



Everyone else is going to kill me, but *Rayman 2* isn't as fun as *Rayman*. Yeah, yeah, it looks like a million bucks, but who cares when there's not enough to do? An off-the-shoulder angle for shots makes hitting a target more challenging than need be. Otherwise control is fine—I can't get into this game because there's nothing new for me to see. I'm not one for praising a game simply because it's not on the PlayStation like the gentleman to my right.

G 9 C 7 P 7 M 8 O 7 **80**



I don't know how to say this but, uh, I like *Rayman 2* more than the original, 2D *Rayman*... there, I said it. That being said, this is among the absolute pinnacle of N64 development. Banjo, Mario, Link, Turok and co. have a new roomie to share the Treehouse with...Ubi has just entered the N64 elite. Stunning visuals, phenomenal gameplay, and surprisingly good music all make for one of the top 5 N64 games of all time... now go buy it.

G 10 C 9 P 10 M 8 O 9 **98**



Rayman 2
Nintendo 64
Ubi Soft
Platformer



Are my eyes deceiving me, Real Time Strategy on the N64?! *Starcraft 64* has everything from the PC version except Internet play... uhh wait that the whole point behind *Stracraft*? Generally as a console gamer I don't care much for PC ports but *Starcraft* is super addicting! Thank heavens I can get my fix for the price of an N64 cart... I know others (ahem, Kid Fan) who choose to go the more expensive super-PC route.

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 6 **80**



Why would I want to play *Starcraft* when I can play the real thing? I don't care what Eggo says, *C&C* is better than *Starcraft*. Single player mode makes this fact more evident since *Starcraft's* solo missions blow chunks. Worst, midway through development the modem peripheral was killed? That leaves us with a 2-player split screen strategy game. Oh, that's real cool—I'm going to try to sneak up on my opponent hoping he doesn't look at my side of the screen.

G 7 C 6 P 7 M 8 O 6 **65**



Let's get one thing straight: PC games should stay on PCs and console games should stay on consoles...capice? Why on earth Nintendo would want to port an aging PC RTS to a console that's a rather hostile environment for such things is beyond me (split-screen RTS' don't cut it). Alas, the game is riddled with slowdown and the cumbersome interface gets in the way much too quickly. IF you have to have an RTS on N64 make it *Command & Conquer*.

G 6 C 6 P 6 M 7 O 8 **70**



Starcraft
Nintendo 64
Nintendo
Strategy



Hmm... I wasn't impressed with this game at E3, but either Koei's worked hard on it, or I was playing another game entirely and should have my head examined. This is the closest N64 owners will ever get to *Metal Gear Solid/Syphon Filter*—a tactical espionage, action-packed adventure on N64. *Winback* will be greedily devoured by gamers looking for something different and not-so-cute. The N64 needs more games like this.

G 8 C 7 P 9 M 8 O 9 **88**



Winback is one of those games that will probably slip through the cracks. I hope this isn't the case. *Winback* is exactly what the Nintendo 64 needs to grab some of that older demographic from Sony and Sega. Somehow Koei managed to impliment enough into *Winback* to separate it from the me-too crowd. Of course it's in the vein of *Syphon Filter*, but I can bring myself to say that's it's a clone. Need a break from Mario and the gang, then here it is.

G 8 C 7 P 9 M 7 O 8 **90**



A good espionage game on the N64?! *Winback* easily makes up for the mess that was *Mission: Impossible* with excellent play mechanics and an innovative control system. The story might borrow a bit from *GoldenEye*, but overall, Koei has produced a quality stealth title. Expect less exploration than *Syphon Filter* and *Metal Gear Solid* but definitely just as action packed. Solid Snake might be out of a job when *Winback* hits!

G 7 C 9 P 8 M 7 O 8 **92**



Winback
Nintendo 64
Koei
Action/Adventure



TrickStyle
Dreamcast
Acclaim
Hoverboard



It certainly looks nice, I'll give it that. Alas, that's about as far as I'm willing to take this. This game suffers from one overwhelming malady: Euro-itis. That's the unfortunate condition that used to afflict European developers en masse, leading to games with bloody amazing visuals and absolutely no gameplay (ah yes, the glory days of UK Amiga development, <hack>). It's a stunner but you won't be taking this one home to mom.

G 10 C 7 P 6 M 6 O 7 **70**



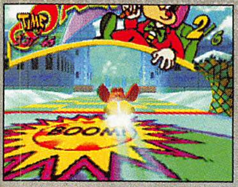
OK, *Trickstyle* is just too amazing looking for its own good. Not since *Pen Pen* have I squinted so much when watching a game being played. I simply can't get over theese visuals and don't get me started on the lighting effects—so very pretty! The only problem is that I've had more than my share of skating related games this month with *Tony Hawk Pro Skater*. Fans of extreme games will love this hoverboard insanity!

G 10 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 7 **88**



Trickstyle looks great, no doubt about that. Unfortunately, graphics aren't what make a game, it's gameplay and that's where *Trickstyle* falls short. I've already expressed my disinterest in skateboarding games (which is basically what this game is), and *Trickstyle* does nothing to entice me to play further. This game's just not fun to me, whereas a PlayStation game like *Tony Hawk* can at least hold my interest.

G 9 C 8 P 6 M 7 O 8 **76**



Pen Pen Trilcelon
Dreamcast
Infogrames
Racing



When I hear US gamers grousing that they "never get to play all the games Japan gets", I usually grit my teeth and try to drown out that sort of ignorant prattle. Well I hope you're happy, because someone heard you whining. I only pray that you take your medicine like a man, 'cause there's plenty more where this came from... This game was cool back when it served as a break between bouts of *VF3tb*. Now? Frisbee, anyone?

G 8 C 7 P 5 M 6 O 8 **60**



Don't make me play this anymore please! Who's idea was it to release this in the US? If Sega wants to have a long stint with its dream machine I suggest that product quality control become more strict. My 10 year old nephew was more entertained by *Get Bass!* than this pile. Neither racer nor platformer does this game resemble. Even if *Pen Pen* was "priced to sell" I would pass. There's a whole world of 128-bit out there, this isn't it.

G 5 C 5 P 5 M 5 O 9 **50**



At the launch of the Japanese Dreamcast, I thought this game was alright. Pretty, colorful, and goofy with a novel triathalon theme. Now, compared to the rest of the U.S. DC launch library, *PPTI* has lost much of that novelty. It has the kiddy factor going for it, but racing fans will want *Hydro Thunder*. Also, titles like *Soul Calibur*, *Shen Mue*, and *Sonic Adventure* detract from what I once thought were good graphics (*PPTI's* best feature before).

G 7 C 6 P 6 M 7 O 9 **69**



PepsiMan
PlayStation (import)
Jasrac
Platformer



Cerberus likes this game...then again, he likes every game- he's sorta the anti-Mikey, "give it to Cerberus, he'll play anything" (think of him as a modern-day E. Storm; Ernest Evans, anyone?). Why on earth anybody would want pay-per-view commercials (outside of Cerberus, apparently) is a little beyond my small closed mind, but so be it! All is not lost, however, as I've always wanted an excuse to give a game a single digit score...or even better:

G $ C $ P $ M $ O $ **-90**



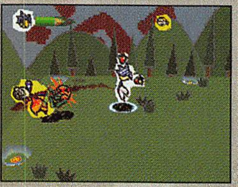
I loved Pepsiman in *Fighting Vipers* and have been waiting years for the clumsy mascot to make his long overdue return to Videogames. This game is pure light hearted fun as players attempt to guide Pepsiman to the nearest soda machine... what a concept! While this title will never see the light of day in America, it is an excellent purchase for Import fiends, especially with a $20 price tag. Definitely the choice of a new generation!

G 6 C 9 P 7 M 5 O 10 **82**



For $20 you can't go wrong with this game, right? If it were a game, maybe. Too bad it's a thinly veiled propaganda tool... a marketing dream designed to make people laugh while being told to drink Pepsi. But literally paying for an ad with a game-coated shell is not my idea of a good time. Forgive me for breaking the spell and trying to save some of you from financing this ill-conceived venture. Don't drink the Kool Aid, my friends!

G 6 C 7 P 3 M 6 O 10 **$$**



Raku Gaki Showtime
PlayStation (import)
Enix
Fighting



Yep, there's nothing in gamedeom quite as quirky or as achingly fun as a Treasure title. While they do have their misses (*Troublemakers*, *Light Crusader*, *Silhouette Mirage*), RS is not among them. From the second I sat down with this game I was horribly addcited. The psuedo-*PoyPoy* gameplay coupled with the whimsical graphics kept me up to the wee hours of the morning. Now bring me *Bangaioh*, the horizontal follow-up to *Silvergun*.

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 7 O 9 **93**



On one hand you've got your *Power Stones* and on the other you've got your Color Forms (remember those?). Take 'em both and throw them in an Oster blender and out comes Treasure's *Raku Gaki* Showtime. *Raku Gaki* is Japanese for scribble. You'll know why Treasure dubbed it so when you play. *Raku Gaki* is sheer 4-player insanity. It's *Power Stone* on mushrooms. Hunt this one down at all costs coz this one's staying in Japan.

G 7 C 9 P 9 M 6 O 10 **90**



Treasure is definitely right on top of my favorite developers list. Their games, though lacking in universal appeal are chalk full of brilliant character design and utterly unique gameplay. *Raku Gaki Showtime* is pure Treasure genius! Just the sheer look of the game (battling cardboard cutouts) had me interested from the get go. I can't see US gamers getting into this one but if you consider quirky imports I know you'll be in heaven.

G 7 C 9 P 9 M 6 O 10 **90**



SF Zero 3
Sega Saturn (import)
Capcom
Fighting



If you can believe it (and I know I had a hard time accepting it) *SFZ3* on Saturn is the **best** version of the game available (yes, better than the DC rev). Flawless animation, precise control and modes that none of the other versions of the game have. So, where does the Saturn go from here? Unfortunately we're almost out of time with our beloved friend (word has it *Final Fight The Revenge* will be the last) and I'm just a little saddened.

G 9 C 10 P 9 M 8 O 4 **94**



SF Zero 3 for Saturn beats every other version simply because of its new Dramatic Battle mode. DC allows you to battle it out with two friends but the Saturn lets you take on 2 AI controlled opponent. Loading time is nearly as speedy as that of Sega's latest son with no lose of frames or backgrounds. Blazing gameplay plus the Saturn pad makes this one even better than the DC version. I'm sorry but the Saturn is not a dead system, it's taking a long nap.

G 9 C 10 P 9 M 8 O 0 **93**



Can't really say I was surprised to see yet another aracde perfect *Street Fighter* game. With 4-meg RAM cart in hand, *Zero 3* loads almost as quick as its DC counterpart and with not a single missing animation frame. The control is exact and again I make a plea to Sega or any other company to please release a converter to allow for Saturn pads to be used on the Dreamcast. *Street Fighter* fans this is a must have for your collection!

G 9 C 10 P 8 M 8 O 6 **95**



Gundam
Dreamcast (import)
Bandai
Mech Sim



There's not a single gamer I know that doesn't like mechs. Problem is, we don't often get to play a game that's even halfway decent featuring these mechanized monsters (anyone else remember *Target Earth*?). While *Gundam* is decent, the big problem is that the HUD takes up way too much of the screen obscuring a lot of the action. The game looks pretty good and if you want *Gundam Side Story* on DC (I'm sure somebody does), well, here ya go.

G 7 C 7 P 7 M 5 O 5 **74**



The Dreamcast is definitely shaping up to be a Mech fan's system of choice. Although *Gundam* is nowhere nearly as action packed as *Frame Gride* or *VO:OT*, it is still packed full of awesome battles and, with the ability to control other mechs on your team, gets very addicting. I had a great time just sending my underlings into combat and watching the fireworks from afar. A US release is unlikely but who ever thought *Pen Pen* would make it out?

G 7 C 7 P 9 M 6 O 8 **86**



Don't get me wrong, I love mechs, growing up on *Robotech*, *Voltron*, *Tranzor Z*, etc. but I've never liked *MechWarrior*, which is basically what this game is—*MW* with better graphics, hand-to-hand combat (pretty cool), and team command elements. Despite the *Gundam* theme and these new features, the gameplay is still a bit lethargic for my tastes. There's only one mech game for me: *Virtual On* (ok two if you count *VO:OT*).

G 7 C 6 P 7 M 8 O 8 **72**

FIRST FOR N64

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High Speed Street Racing and Extreme Motocross!

Features:

- Licensed Motorcycles
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- 3 difficulty levels - Beginner, Intermediate, and Expert.
- 2 physical variations on each track - Road Curves and Hills geometries will be completely new.
- Controller Pak Compatible
- Expansion Pak Compatible
- Rumble Pak Compatible
- Mp3 music system for full length near CD-quality
- Fully animated riders with realistic stunts and bone crushing crashes.

Player Modes:

- Championship Mode: 1-4 players. Player races through a series of tracks that get progressively harder.
- Single Race (Arcade) Mode. Player enjoys top speed racing solo or with friends on the tracks (and weather conditions) previously opened.
- Time Attack Mode with Ghost Bike. Player is to beat their own best time (saved on the Controller Pak).
- Stunt Mode. Player pulls off as many radical stunts as possible to accumulate points while racing around the dirt track.



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RAYM

THE GREA





I think "*The Great Escape*" is a misnomer, because *Rayman 2* is more like "*The Great Entrance*." Titles like this and *Sonic Adventure* are ushering in a new era of gaming... one which should please hard-core gamers as well as the common masses—games with 3D graphics and solid gameplay.

If you've already memorized the lecture on switch-flippers and scavenger hunts, you may skip this paragraph. But for those who might've missed it, I'll go over it one more time. In the past, most 3D platformers left much to be desired for true (read "2D") platforming fanatics. No matter how gorgeous a 3D environment looked, unfortunately, the gameplay tended to be lacking. Either you were looking for a switch to open the locked door, or you'd be searching for X amount of Y's to get to the next level. In other words, the constant jumping and shooting gameplay of old, had been replaced by a boring game of hide-and-seek. Plus, the traditional fears of 2D platforming (rushed jumps, bottomless pits, and low-flying enemies) were replaced by new ones in 3D platformers (deadly camera angles, lack of Z-buffering, and poor collision detection).



R REVIEW	EGGO: SO, WE MEET AGAIN...	DEVELOPER - UBI SOFT	1 PLAYER	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 96
		PUBLISHER - UBI SOFT	AVAILABLE OCT.	



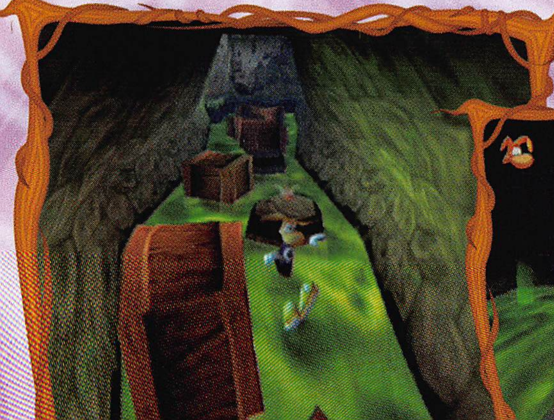


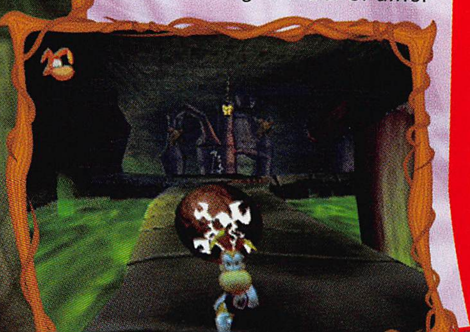


So you can understand why I shed many a tear, cried foul, and flicked my thumb in the direction of the Eiffel Tower when I heard that ol' Rayman had gone 3D. You see, when the original *Rayman* was released four years ago, it was one of the last great 2D platformers. In fact, I played it to death... my near-death, the death of a controller, and the near-death of those "damn Ubi guys" because I wanted to fly to France to murdalize 'em for making the game so frustratingly hard. I can see the Platforming Elders sitting back, snickering at that last statement as they polish their "I finished *Chakan*" medals, but did **you** save all 100 electoons in *Rayman*? If so, then I have nothing but respect for you, and I feel like a brother, because we've persevered and survived through traumatic gaming experiences which have broken many a gamer—leaving them mere drooling, babbling shells of their former self.

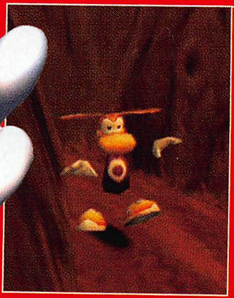
Agh! I'm sorry. Despite the constant 'treatments,' the flashbacks still possess me at times... Getting back to *Rayman 2*, the reviewable leapt onto my desk the other day, and I must say I've been looking forward to this moment ever since I walked away from E3 thinking "Game of the Show." If you remember the preview in the August issue, I said there were two problems which Ubi Soft needed to address: camera angles and music/sound. Fortunately, Ubi Soft has addressed both these areas since I saw the game last.

Let's start with the camera angles. I don't normally complain about shoddy camera work, since half the time I hear that, I attribute it to gamers making excuses for their shortcomings. Well, *Rayman 2* originally did have problems in this area, but I feel they've been fixed as well as humanly possible. Considering the mind-blowing number of differ-

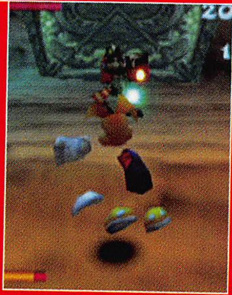




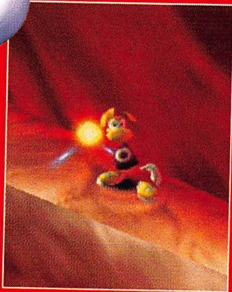
Just Some of Rayman's Moves...



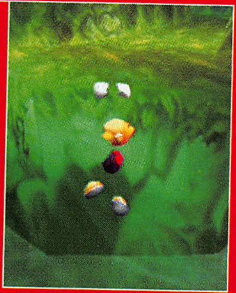
Helicopter Hair: The "emergency" button for platform fanatics, Helicopter Hair lets you slow things down a bit to get your bearings. Then, you can always cancel it for a plummeting freefall at any time.



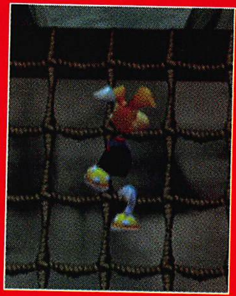
Lum Blast: Rayman's weapon of choice now, this is his 3D substitute for that white glove. At least you don't have to wait for it to come back.



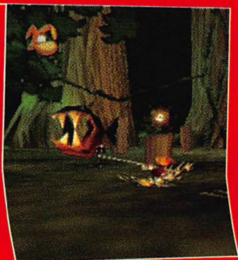
Super Lum Blast: Attainable later in the game, the powered shot lets you zap doors by focusing all the evil energy of the 3D world in one mighty burst.



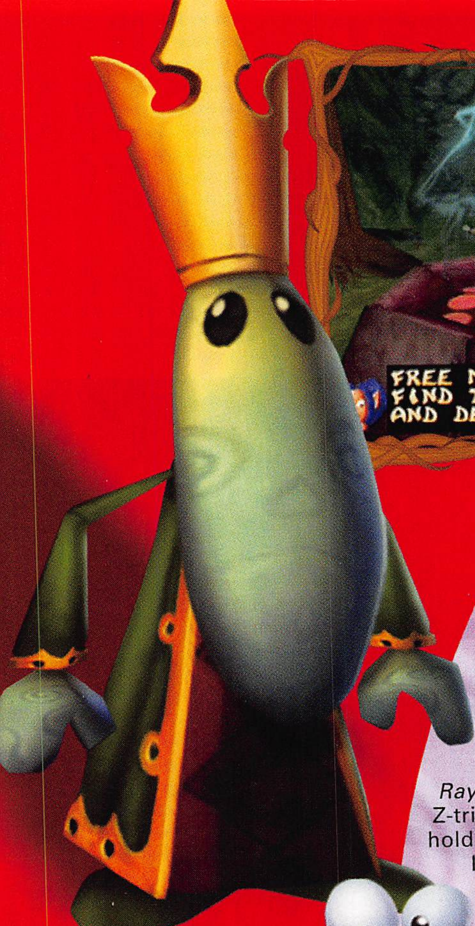
Ledge Hang: What platformer would be complete without the patented 'hanging by the fingernails' clutch of death? <shiver> Reminds me of that lobster boss in the original...



Climbing: Something which actually is made better by 3D graphics, climbing can now take you up an imposing cliffside, as opposed to just a nearby sprite branch.



Water Skiing: One of Rayman's many hobbies when he's "between games" is water-skiing. Here we see him takin' a spin with his friend Ssssam.











ent landscapes in this game, and the countless camera angles required to follow the action whenever Rayman enters or exits a room or rounds a corner, inevitably you **will** run into an angle that causes your forehead to crease. But trust me on this, judging from the early versions of this game, Ubi Soft has come a long way in this department, and the camera angles are near perfect.

There is a catch, however... in the world of 3D platforming, finding the right camera angle will require as much work on your part as the developers. I'll assume since you own an N64 that you've played *Zelda:OOT*. *Rayman 2* requires that same skillful manipulation of the Z-trigger that *Zelda* did. Hitting the Z-trigger once moves the camera around directly behind you. And when fighting an enemy, holding the Z-trigger locks onto a target, so Rayman strafes around it without turning his back. If you've mastered these basic techniques, you'll be able to jump right in and play *Rayman 2* without any fear of camera death. The invisible cameraman is pretty smart, and will usually come around to follow over your shoulder at all opportunities. Best of all, the speed of camera movement is perfect—not agonizingly slow, yet not headache-inducing fast either. Kudos to Ubi Soft for smoothing over the bumps in this normally rocky category.

Music, too, has been added, and it's decent. What? Only "decent?" Not "spellbindingly capable of whisking you away to far distant lands?" Not "the smoothest-sounding symphony since Beethoven kicked the bucket?" Nay... tis only decent. Perhaps I'm being a harsh critic, but the original *Rayman* had some stellar tunes to go with those extravagant environments. Of course, that was on PlayStation, and this is N64—the bane of every composer in game land, for its cart-based curse of restricted memory. And yes, *Rayman* also appeared on Saturn, Jaguar (sorry), PC, and every other console known to man, including cave walls, graph paper, and the ill-fated Vectrex.

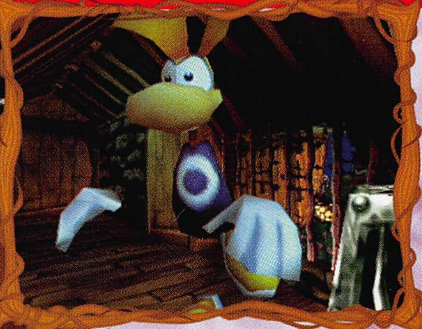


The sounds are a minor sticking point. Character voices are comprised of gibberish, instead of the cute tri-syllabic, creature-unique languages of *Banjo-Kazooie*. I would've preferred the latter, because nobody











wants to listen to gibberish. It's eerie hearing the muffled whispers of Murfy; reminds me of the *Sixth Sense* and that line, "You know that prickly feeling you get on the back of your neck sometimes? ...that's them." At least the music in *Rayman 2* is not grating... Most likely, you won't even hear it because you'll be focused on the gameplay. And before your 'flaming E-mail finger' hits "send," realize that I am not calling this game's music bad. I'm saying that a lofty title of this caliber **deserved** better. Iguana was able to deliver the goods both visually and aurally with *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil*. Such is not the case with *Rayman 2*.

But enough with the blemishes. None of these mild criticisms should dissuade you from picking up a copy of this game right now. As mentioned in the preview, the gameplay is fantastic for a 3D platformer. There's a lot of variety, in that every level is like a different mini-game. You'll experience heart-pounding chases, nail-biting leaps of faith, and a wild ride on the back of a ticking time bomb. It's far from the scavenger hunt fodder we've been spoon-fed. One minute you're fleeing for your life, scaling a spiraling cobweb overlooking a bottomless pit as a giant spider tries to make dinner out of our jointless hero, then the next level, you could be swimming through an underwater world, collecting air bubbles from a friendly whale seeking freedom, while killer piranha loom in the water just ahead. Or how about that *Crash Bandicoot*-like Hog Wild-ish ride with a catch? Since it's an explosive rocket you're riding, hitting the walls of a tight tunnel will send you careening out of control, destined for a big Ray-splosion.

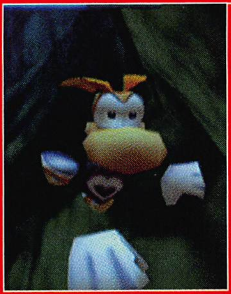
Don't worry if it looks like the gameplay has strayed a bit from Rayman's last outing. You'll come across objects here and there which remind you this is a *Rayman* game. Be it purple fruit, pink rings, helicopter hair... or inhabitants of the world such as the appendage-less mosquito guy or the leapfrogging toadstools. These nice touches are there for ambience as well as tribute to the first game. One thing missing, though, is his white glove. Most likely it didn't translate that well into a three dimensional play mechanic. Much as I'd like to see a return to the days of fist-slinging of old, I don't think I'd enjoy having to wait for the glove to return, compensate for three dimensions, and then send it off again. Instead, Rayman now has energy balls which he can spray with reckless abandon.



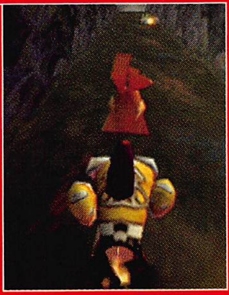




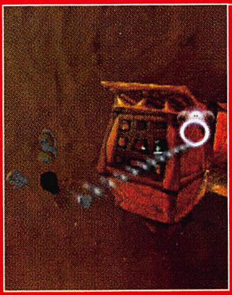
Some more Of Rayman's Moves...



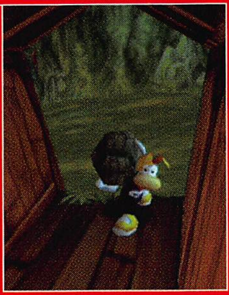
Swim: Unlike traditional adventurers of lore, Rayman has learned how to swim during his four year leave of absence. Of course, swimming is not advisable in every pool you come across...



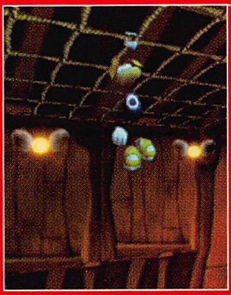
Riding: It's no *Gran Turismo*, but imagine riding on a rocket reminiscent of Earthworm Jim's, weaving through a slalom of crates *Crash Bandicoot*-style.



Ring-Swinging: Like the web-slinging wallcrawler (Spiderman for you buffoons), Rayman can swing from pink ring to pink ring, opening the door to many a secret in the game...



Carrying: In order to get by during the "lean years" between games, Rayman picked up the odd job or two, such as carrying barrels from Point A to Point B. He carries this newfound ability over into *R2*.



Ceiling Hang: Whee! How can you not like this? Reminds me of the monkey bar days of my youth... when I was but a wee eggo in the toaster oven...



Spider Crawl: ECM came up with this term, and it's the closest approximation to what Rayman does: shimmy upwards between two ledges through the sheer might of his non-existent arms and legs.









The graphics are simply mind-blowing. I hate to trespass into the realm of clichéd editorial death, but the screenshots on this page don't do the game justice. *Rayman 2: The Great Escape* is the greatest graphical achievement among 3D platformers on N64, and even more surprising, it plays better than the rest as well. When talking visuals, even spanning all genres on the system, *Rayman 2* can duke it out toe-to-toe with the best of 'em, nearly in the same league as the untouchable Iguana games (*Turok 2, All-Star Baseball*, and *Quarterback Club*). Of course, it's different from those titles in that Rayman's art-style is very cartoony, and the game's sense of humor is Looney Tunes-ish. But these colorful worlds are crafted with ol' fashioned TLC, giving it an almost hand-drawn look.

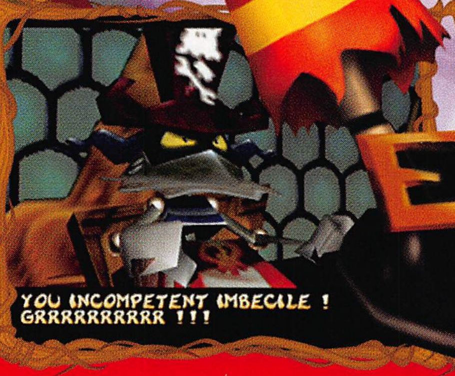
As this review wraps up, I'm almost hesitant to close this latest chapter in the Ubi saga. I mean, after playing a game like *Rayman 2*, in which you're looking forward to every new level with that sparkle in your eye, wondering what treasures await, it's a shame to see it end. But there's hope in the future for those who can't get enough of *Rayman*, because *Rayman 2: The Great Escape* is leaping from N64 to almost every console imaginable: PlayStation, Dreamcast, and PC. Judging from E3, the Dreamcast and 3D-accelerated PC versions are comparable, and they're both drop-dead gorgeous. If you think the N64 was pushed to the limit with this game, you're gonna soil yourself upon seeing the spellbinding world re-drawn with cleaner textures and anti-aliasing. DC owners, it's still a ways off, but you have a masterpiece to look forward to. And N64 owners, if you don't already have this game, do yourself a favor and mortgage the house to pay for this über game from Ubi.





Eggo heard from Hi-Fi that the original Rayman is hidden in this game... but he's been known to be wrong before.







INTERVIEW

Pauline Jacquey Producer of *Rayman 2*



GF: At E3 in '96, there was a 2D *Rayman 2* running at the Ubi Soft booth. Whatever happened to that version of the game?

PJ: Well, the first *Rayman 2* in 2D could have been a really good game with 3D rendering in 2D, different levels of deepness, and really fun gameplay (Frederic Houde, who worked with Michel Ancel, was just reminding me about one gameplay example in which a cannon threw nails on the background. Then Rayman had the ability to climb up the background). At the beginning of '96, we began testing 3D cards and had an amazing display and a very good frame-rate on a 2.5D *Rayman 2*. Then came *Super Mario 64* and then E3, and we started to be weak, and think as everybody did at this time that 3D was the future. Because the universe and the graphic environment of the original Rayman was a strong feature, Michel Ancel wanted to make his character move and live in a realistic but still cartoonish environment, in 3D. I think that we probably were also scared of being old-fashioned weirdos by developing a 2D game, while *Crash Bandicoot* was presented at E3 in '96.

GF: Is there any chance that we'll ever see that 2D *Rayman 2* published? Even if Ubi Soft only made 10,000 copies? And if we kicked and screamed and said we'd love you forever?

PJ: I don't think that there are any plans to start a new *Rayman* in 2D, but I would love to be the producer on that game. Nevertheless, When you see games like *Crash Bandicoot 3* or *Zelda 64* or even *Quake*-likes, it's true that 3D gives the player new emotions and sensations. It's what we all are craving, isn't it? =) But, you can still kick and scream and say you love us...

GF: Was the development team upset that *Rayman 2* became a 3D game instead of 2D?

PJ: The team had mixed feelings about the switch from 2D to 3D. Actually, everybody was fascinated by the new features that 3D brought. Everybody was playing *Super Mario* at this time, and thought it was the best game on earth. Everybody was very excited about 3D also because it was new, and it required new tools, new ways of thinking, gameplay, environments, and technology. We were caught in the 3D trap, as everybody was. Now we are back on earth, and oh my god, it's really, really hard to create a good game in 3D.

GF: Was *Rayman 2: The Great Escape* 'dumbed down' to make the game more accessible for non-hard-core gamers? Or is it just difficult to making a polygonal game challenging?

PJ: Well... the main negative feedback that we had on the original *Rayman*, was that this game was almost impossible to finish, because it was so hard. So of course we took that into account while designing *Rayman 2*. We worked a lot by organizing focus groups with kids, to help us find a good balance between challenge, fun, and immediate controls. And the result is that you can destroy the fun when a game is too hard for sure (and *Rayman 2* was like that last E3).

So we truly wanted to give players easy-to-understand gameplay mechanics and tricks, but also gameplay that could be played over and over again because it's still fun, even after a long time. We were not tortured by the Ubi Soft board to "dumb down" *Rayman 2*, I swear...

GF: Are you happy with *Rayman 2's* gameplay, or were there ideas you had which you weren't able to implement?

PJ: We are really happy with *Rayman 2* N64's gameplay in regard to the hardware we are developing for. But you have to be tricky when implementing gameplay and action sequences for a small processor. The point is to find really good and efficient ideas, and not be lost by the realization, because it's so easy to do a 3D game where there is nothing to do, where the gameplay is so slow you wanna watch TV instead. So, that's the way we thought [about] *Rayman 2*: really fun and fast paced game ingredients [such] as the waterskiing or the rodeo riding, that we are using in different level design environments. The big challenge in 3D, was also not to build the gameplay on jumping precision, because it's so annoying to jump in 3D (it's almost impossible to build gameplay around that, and it's not fun). So that's why a platform game (original *Rayman*) turned into an action epic game (*Rayman 2*).

GF: How many people total worked on the project? How many artists?

PJ: About 60 to 80 people continuously worked on *Rayman 2* for the N64, the Dreamcast and the PC version. Half of them are artists (animators, graphic designers, or game designers), 25% are programmers and 25% are programmers who designed the behavior of the enemies/the fun ingredients of the game.

GF: Are we going to have to wait another four years for *Rayman 3*?

PJ: Well, as we all want to have a 3-year sabbatical, it might be. Actually, we are more planning a 2-year development cycle (a bit more than *Rayman 2*)

GF: Why doesn't Rayman throw his fist any more?

PJ: There is a really good reason: We did tests and waiting for your fist to come back was really not dynamic enough. You can't feel it in the original Rayman 2D, because environments are not wide and large, but it's really obvious in 3D. (Judging from Rayman's size in the game, in the original *Rayman*, you can see 20 meters away from you, whereas in *Rayman 2*, you can see 100 meters away). So, in 3D, if you want to shoot an enemy that is 100 meters far away from you, you have to wait 10 seconds for your fist to come back. We wanted a much more dynamic shot, and it didn't make sense to have Rayman throwing many fists, so we changed his fist to a "lum blast" (the shot).

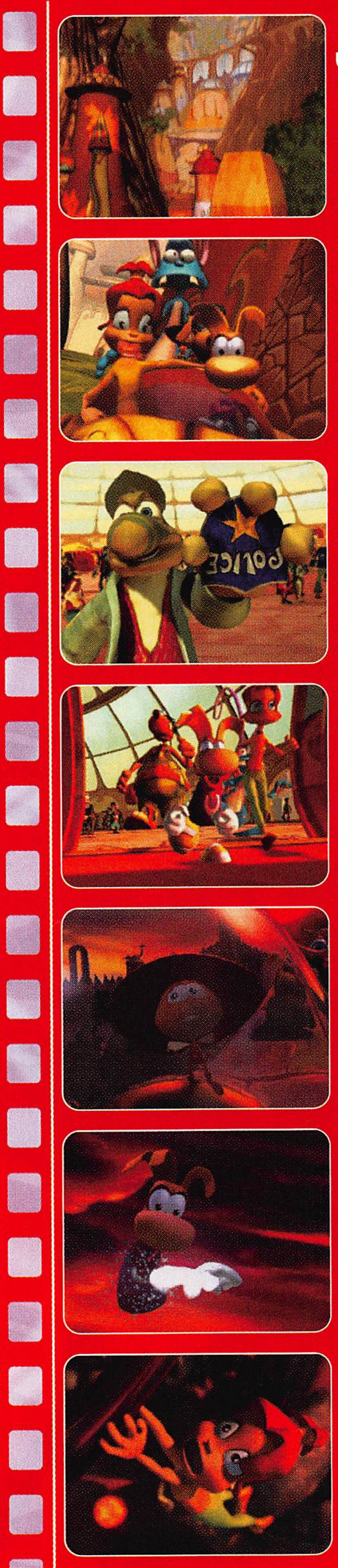
GF: Considering the tremendous success of the original *Rayman*, do you think there's demand for a good 2D platformer in today's market?

PJ: I'll let the marketing answer this question (but my personal feeling is yes, a million times yes)

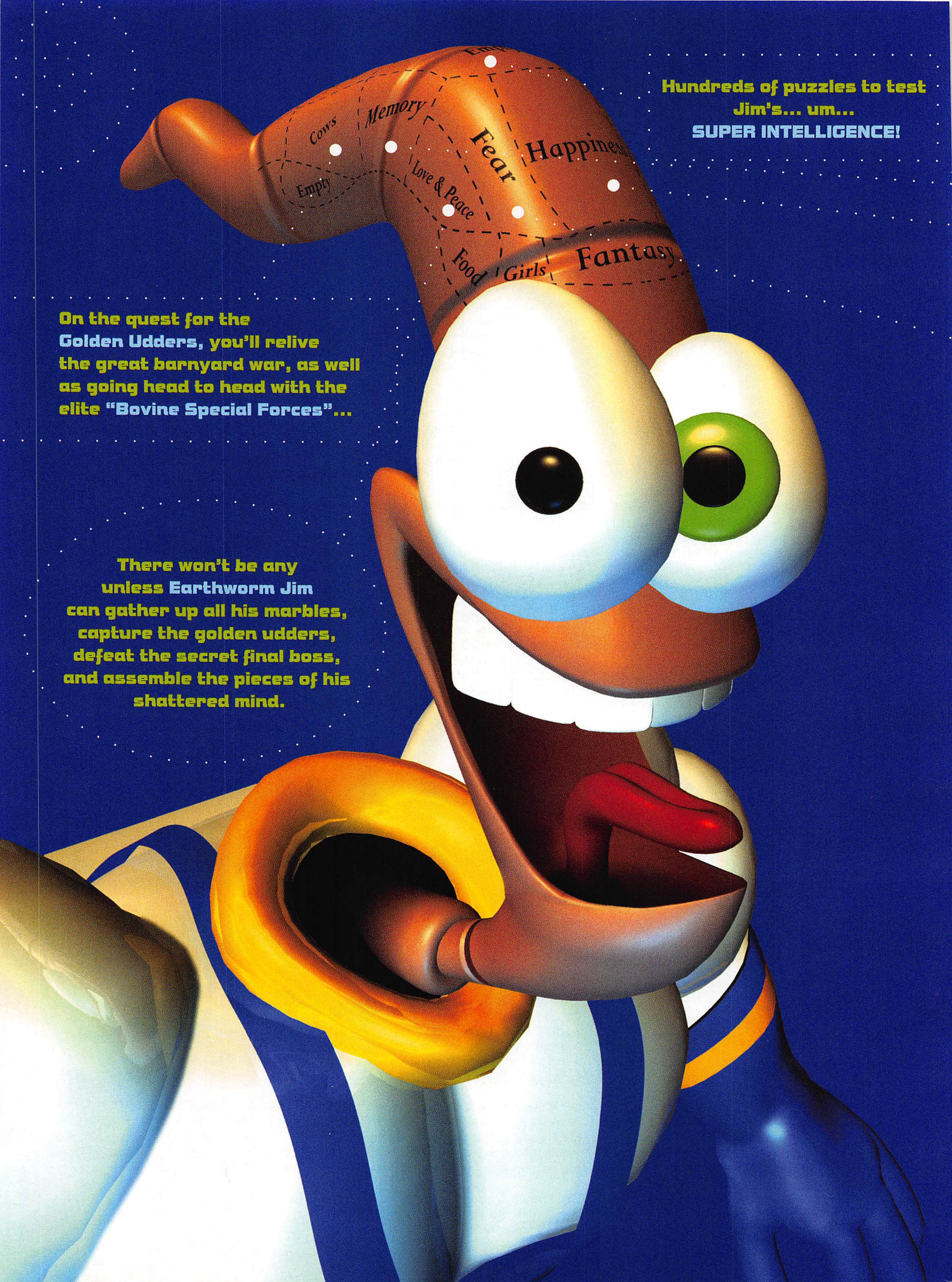
GF: French fries, French toast, or French dressing: which are you most proud of?

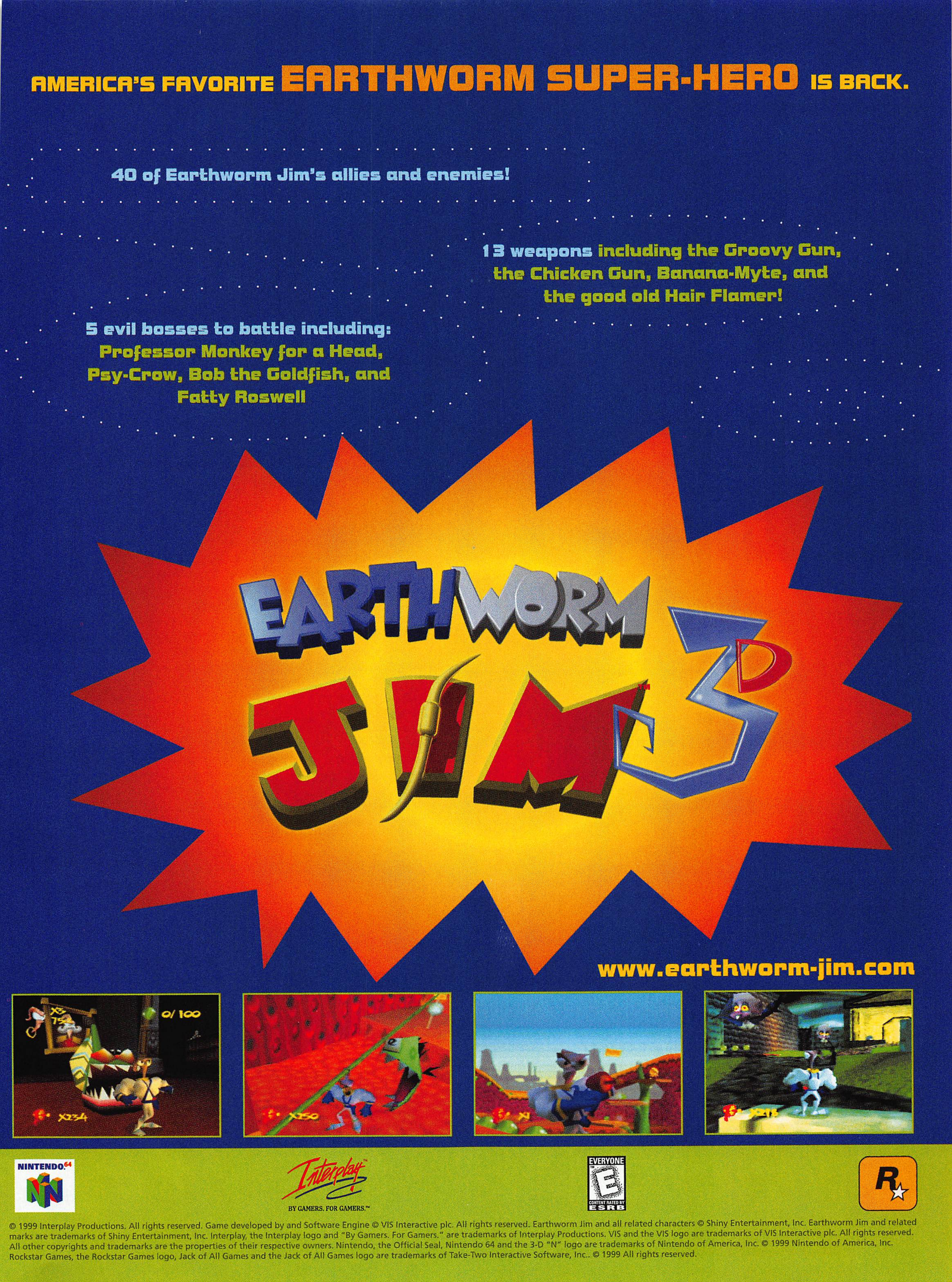
PJ: French can-can. [ed's note: Copout!]

Rayman CG animated TV Series for Fall 2000!



First *Monster Rancher*, now this... My favorite games are getting their own animated TV series, and now Rayman is joining the fray. I had a chance to check it out at E3 and it looks great. The CG is awesome and the voices are pretty good. The only problem is we'll have to wait till next year to see it.


Hundreds of puzzles to test Jim's... um... SUPER INTELLIGENCE!
Cows
Memory
Fear
Empty
Love & Peace
Food
Girls
Fantasy
On the quest for the Golden Udders, you'll relive the great barnyard war, as well as going head to head with the elite "Bovine Special Forces"...
There won't be any unless Earthworm Jim can gather up all his marbles, capture the golden udders, defeat the secret final boss, and assemble the pieces of his shattered mind.


AMERICA'S FAVORITE EARTHWORM SUPER-HERO IS BACK.
40 of Earthworm Jim's allies and enemies!
13 weapons including the Groovy Gun, the Chicken Gun, Banana-Myte, and the good old Hair Flamer!
5 evil bosses to battle including: Professor Monkey for a Head, Psy-Crow, Bob the Goldfish, and Fatty Roswell
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Shi•do•shi (shi dō shē), *n.* a video game editor who enjoys dating sims, fruity games, and *Sailor Moon*... and whose masculinity is constantly being called into question.

Tuesday August 24th: Alright, this is getting bad... it's been two weeks since I first touched the reviewable copy of *Thousand Arms*... and my life hasn't been the same. I should never have cancelled on Sue the Friday before last... in favor of that virtual date with Sodina. I need to take a shower, my phone hasn't rung in the past week, and I'm beginning to fear what I've become... My deepest, darkest fear is fast becoming reality with every revolution of that infernal disk... <sigh> I'm an aspiring member of the 'Doshi clan!

Argh! Atlus, what have you done to me? One minute, I'm a happy-go-lucky video game editor who happens to like sports, the beach, and women (the fleshy, real kind... not ones named Lara or Sarah). Then, next thing I know, I catch myself reaching for that sealed copy of *Toki Meki Memorial*... <slap> "Bad, Eggo! Bad!" It is with much sorrow and fear for our future that I inform you that America's first 'dating sim,' *Thousand Arms*, deserves to be a smash title. Of course, it's destined to be just a quivering mass lying in the wake of *Final Fantasy VIII*... but *Thousand Arms* is a much better game than that. And it's my job to convince you of this in the 800 words I'm allotted.

I won't bore you with the standard review-speak you've heard a thousand times elsewhere: good graphics, 3D environments, sprite characters, turn-based combat, solid music, deep story, immersive gameplay, yeah yeah. I know what you really want to hear about... the women! Since this is our first crack at a dating sim, you must be wondering what to expect.

As the story goes, you're Meis Triumph (pronounced "mice"), son of the lecherous ruler of Kant... that is, until the Dark Acolytes demolish it. Since it's hard to be a womanizing nobleman when your kingdom has been decimated, Meis sets out to roam the world seeking revenge. As he travels, Meis comes across other warriors who've been 'burned' by the Dark Acolytes, and they bond together, forming a ragtag band of rebels, all holding a grudge against the legions of the dark.

As the game progresses, it keeps track of your intimacy level with all the ladies. Depending on your conversation choices, women begin to either love you or hate you. Of course, there's more to the 'dating' than just steering a conversation. You can also go on dates with individual girls, taking them to romantic points of interest in towns. Plus, you can play mini-games with them (unique for every girl), which are always fun—it's *Mario Party* in a box! What dating game would be complete without being able to give gifts to the ladies? Sure enough, there are shops in every town which sell trinkets you can give as presents to the woman of your dreams... at that point in time. Hey, who ever said a romantic ruler can't be fickle? The women themselves cover a wide range of tastes, such as: the goody-two-shoes-like nice girl, the nerdy inventor chick, or the 'bad girl' to name a few.

Since it's such a good translation, it's worth mentioning. Atlus has done a fine job of localizing the text while still keeping the racy humor in the game. In the preview of *TA* three months back, I was concerned that the English voices could drag down the quality of this otherwise "A" title if they weren't good. Well, thankfully, the dub is above average. Sure, some of the voices I can do without, but at least the main characters (who you hear from the most) are done well. The voice-overs aren't *Metal Gear Solid*-caliber, but they're more than adequate for this game.









Thousand Arms











I'm sure you've heard by now that my biggest gripe with *Final Fantasy VIII* was that it didn't have soul, that little special something which Square RPGs used to have in abundance. Well, *Thousand Arms* has soul, and it's a game which any true RPG player shouldn't miss. The sprite characters are super-deformed (as they should be). And the thought bubbles over their head are better at conveying emotions (crying, surprise, anger, etc.) than polygonal characters, though *Shen Mue* could change all that.

The story line in this game is a welcome relief. It doesn't have a convoluted plot involving betrayal, amnesia, or the fate of the universe hanging in the balance. It's just Meis battling evil as the well-meaning spirit blacksmith, trying to chase a couple skirts along the way.

I've said time and again that 1999 is the Year of the RPG. And despite having two Square entrants in this race, *Thousand Arms* is my pick for RPG of the year. Don't let the media hype fool you into buying a lesser RPG. This is the one to own. Now if Sodina wants to go out with Soushi, I think I'll give Sue a call...

After finishing this review, Eggo rushed off to the hospital to receive testosterone injections while babbling about joining a football team.



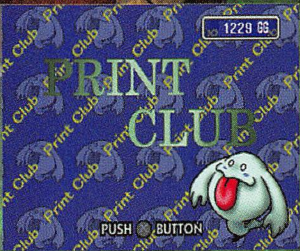


"PC Engine Cinemas Return"

Old school gamers will appreciate this feature. *Thousand Arms* advances the story from time to time with PC Engine-like animated sequences, in which the characters speak and their onscreen caricatures move as well. Of course, the 32-bit version is a lot more advanced, with 360° rotation (one minute it's polygons and sprites, then the camera turns away, and when it returns, you're looking at anime-like characters).

"Shameless Print Club Plug!"

Print Club, the photo-taking machine at your local arcade is owned by Atlus. So what better way to promote it than to throw Print Club into this dating sim? It's a marriage made in heaven! In *Thousand Arms*, you can patronize Print Club machines and have your picture taken with your honey. You can also hand-pick the picture frame and look at it later in the game's picture album.

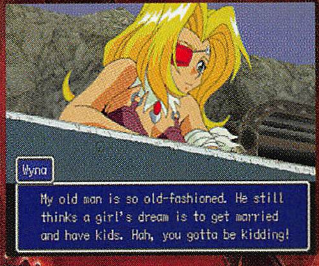






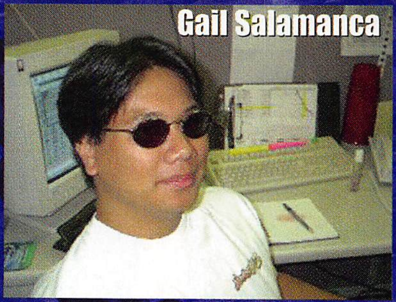






An Interview with ATLUS!

Thousand Arms Interview with Glenn Wissner, Product Manager Atlus USA and Gail Salamanca, Product Specialist Atlus USA



GameFan: Sodina, or Wyna?
Glenn: Sodina, she's someone I can bring home to mother.
Gail: Hmmm. Let me see. I would have to say Wyna, she's got the goods.

GF: How was *Thousand Arms* received in Japan, and do you think we'll see a sequel?
Glenn: It did very well overall with the Japanese gamers. *Thousand Arms* was covered heavily in the Japanese press and was featured in several popular gaming magazines.

GF: If *Thousand Arms* does well here, do you think it will unleash a flood of dating sims on the U.S.?
Glenn: First of all, I would not classify *Thousand Arms* as a "dating sim," but more an RPG with a dating system as part of the overall experience. Secondly, yes, if *Thousand Arms* becomes a best-seller, you can count on seeing more dating simulations and you can count on Atlus U.S.A., Inc to bring them to you.

GF: Would Atlus look into bringing over other Red Company games, like *Sakura Taisen*?
Glenn: We are always on the search for new titles to localize for the US gamer. However, I can't reveal any specific plans just yet. Atlus will soon announce our upcoming titles and I think you will be jumping for joy when you hear the news.

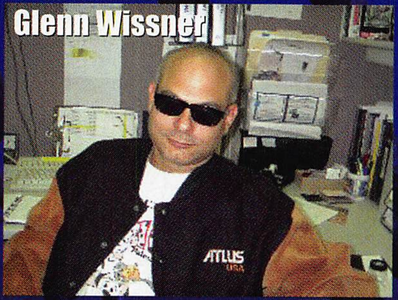
GF: Are there any plans for *Thousand Arms*-related merchandise/toys?
Glenn: We have produced several added value products for *Thousand Arms* purchasers. An oversized 3" x 4" lenticular motion card featuring Meis, our hero, wielding his mighty sword. Also included with the game is the venerable memory card sticker sheet. The sticker sheet depicts 4 different full color scenes from the game. Also, an exclusive (for now) for purchasers of the game is a special mail in offer for a free ($2.00 S & H) multimedia screensaver program with redbook audio soundtrack "enhanced CD" loaded with additional wave files, outtakes, high-resolution graphics, gaming related Internet links and a whole lot more. This giveaway disc would surely fetch a handsome sum if sold at retail. We are also doing a 24" x 36" full color art poster for those who pre-order *Thousand Arms*. More products may be on the way; only time and consumer trends will tell.

GF: The characters in this game are drawn in traditional super-deformed style. Do you think super-deformed characters, like 2D games, will die off since we're starting to see full-sized characters in games these days?
Gail: I believe there will always be a special place in everyone's hearts for the super-deformed style characters. Many games nowadays have really taken themselves too seriously (ECM's Note: Amen, my brother!). Developers are trying to make everything so realistic that they lose a lot of the "personality" or "soul" if you will in the process. No matter how far gaming technology goes, I still believe that 2D will always be around.

GF: How do you feel about the Polygonal Invasion and the death of sprite-based games?
Gail: I don't know about you guys but it'll be a cold day in hell when you can pry me away from a good 2-D fighting game. Long live 2-D!

GF: Was there anything you wanted changed from the final product, but didn't have the time to implement?
Glenn: Not really, we started with a superior Japanese product and "Americanized" it, infusing pop culture references, American acting and slight game balancing and I think I can speak for the whole team when I say we are very satisfied with the outcome.
Gail: One thing that I would like to have seen was to let the user have the choice to choose between the Japanese and the American voices, but alas.

GF: Some of the sound effects in this game sound like they were produced "in-house." Is that the case?



Gail: You are correct, my friend. We tried using most of the sound effects in the original Japanese version. However, in certain areas such as chasing Bandiger through Mounthand the sound FX used while running through all of the traps were done by Marion's seiyuu (voice actress). We then decided to record all new sfx using our own voice actress so that we could preserve continuity for the US version.

GF: The translation in this game is one of the best we've seen. How many people worked on the localization, and how long did it take?
Glenn: The initial translation took about three months with three primary translators working full time. This is only the first stage of the process. Next the editing and polishing starts in stages. We had two primary full time story editors with the whole localization staff getting involved making revisions up to the last minute prior to recording. Some last minute editing even took place during the recording (kids, don't try this at home).

GF: What type of voice-acting talent did you hire? How many actors? Lines of speech?
Glenn: Good ones I hope. Seriously, we used professional voice over actors from the Los Angeles & Orange County talent pool. Most of the talent had worked on interactive projects in the past. Some have also done TV and film work. We used about 20 actors in all and recorded more than 5,000 lines of speech. One of our actresses, who will remain anonymous, was featured in *Evangelion*... you figure it out.

GF: We applaud Atlus' efforts to bring 'alternative' titles, which we normally wouldn't see, over here. So when are we going to see a niche title like an Atlus fishing game? What's in the future for you guys after *Tail Concerto* and *Thousand Arms*?
Gail: As we said earlier we can't really talk about what we're working on right now but let's say that we might have a couple of surprises for you in the next few months.

GF: Any chance Atlus will publish any Dreamcast titles?
Gail: Dreamcast? I don't know anything about no stinking Dreamcast. Seriously though, all will be revealed in the near future.

GF: Atlus fans must be dying to know: Are you bringing *Persona 2: Innocent Sin* to the states next year?
Gail: Good things come to those who wait.

GF: Ginger, or Mary Ann?
Gail: Mmmmm. Mary Ann. You know what they say about the quiet ones.
Glenn: Mary Ann. Why? The shorts!

REVIEW	EGGO: No, this isn't the sequel to *Wild Arms*!	Developer - Red	1 Player	Viewpoint Score: 95
		Publisher - Atlus	Available Now	



This is no time to second guess yourself.
Killer soundtrack
including music performed by
Blink 182, Ministry, Fear Factory, H2O,
Voodoo Glow Skulls, Joi, Lagwagon,
Ten Foot Pole, Pulley, Face to Face
MTV
MUSIC TELEVISION®
SPORTS
PlayStation
Featuring Music By:
Blink 182
Ministry
Fear Factory
H2O
Face to Face
Voodoo Glow Skulls
Pulley
Lagwagon
Ten Foot Pole
Joi
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
SPORTS
SNOWBOARDING
radical entertainment
THQ
2 Player Split Screen Mode
5 Different Events
Exclusive Create-A-Park Feature
7 Unique Lifestyle Riders
Hundreds Of Trick Combos
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PlayStation

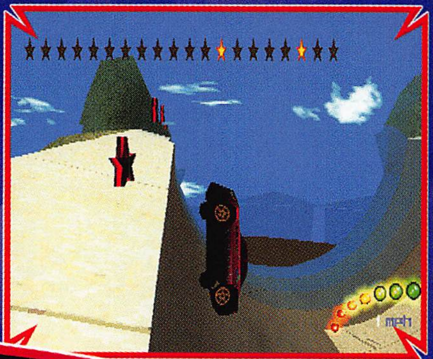
When you ask most guys over the age of 18 to reflect on their youth and what hobbies they were into, they usually answer with one of the following choices: karate, Nintendo, skateboarding, or R.C. cars. For me, the karate lessons lasted about a week; I'm still enamored with Nintendo; skateboarding ended with a cracked rib and a broken ego; and R.C. cars were forgotten when the battery melted through that brand new chassis of my R.C. 10.

Lucky for me, *R.C. Pro Am* was released on the NES, and I was allowed to safely enjoy two of my favorite hobbies, leaking battery acid not included.

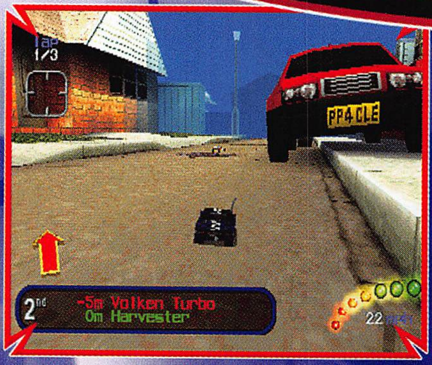
Though most young gamers will probably never know the joy of *R.C. Pro Am* there are developers in the industry who are trying to bring this once-lost genre back into the mainstream. Acclaim's *Revolt* for the PS is the latest game attempting to take us back to the lost days of R.C. madness. Unfortunately, gamers are better served investing in some







RE-VOLT





retro gaming, since *Revolt* fails to capture the excitement that *R.C. Pro Am* did.

First off, *Revolt* suffers from bland graphics, which have fast become a norm in most PS games. I might be a bit jaded, with my wandering eye constantly falling on the Dreamcast, but I know there are excellent-looking PS games out there—*Crash Team Racing* and *Wipeout 3* to name two. The developers of *Revolt* simply needed to spend more time fine-tuning the graphics engine, or perhaps the proper budget wasn't allocated. Either way, I am not impressed.

The frame-rate is compromised even in the one player game, and during the multi-player competition I asked ECM for a blindfold. Fortunately, the control is dead-on and replicates the 'out of control, don't think I can quite make that turn at this speed' gameplay that every R.C. game should have.

The large number of selectable cars was a nice addition; but the tracks are so unexciting, there's no reason why you'd want to master them all. A few of the locales include a museum, supermarket, and botanical gardens—doesn't quite grab your attention, does it?

Revolt deserves a pat on the back for having one of the best track editors around, and the trance/techno soundtrack is very addictive, reminding me of a certain Psygnosis game... Hi my name is *Revolt*, I sound a lot like *Wipeout*, please play with me!

If you're a TRUE fan of R.C. cars then you'll probably get a kick out of *Revolt*, and if you're looking to relive the magic of *R.C. Pro Am* I suggest logging on to E-bay... I think I saw a copy for four bucks the other day.



Fury was last seen fitting a spoiler and off-road tires on his Mom's station wagon. Now where'd that nitrous go?

R REVIEW Fury: My Honda kinda looks like an RC-10.	Developer - Acclaim London Publisher - Acclaim	1-2 Players Available Now	Viewpoint Score :70



CARMAGEDDON™
CONSOLE
Nintendo® 64
Game Boy® Color
Coming soon to other platforms
Available Summer 1999
• Out-race and out-smash your opponents in the newest installments in the award-winning motorized mayhem Carmageddon™ franchise. There are no rules - just drive to survive!
• Choose from over 20 different vehicles, each with unique handling characteristics.
• Over 30 explorable levels and tracks plus all new areas to be explored.
• Huge assembly of different power-ups and weaponry including car bonuses and zombie effects.
• Total freedom to race, chase and annihilate anywhere on the map.
• Zombie pedestrians and psychotic opponents challenge players' skill and abilities.
• Single player and multi-player action.
NINTENDO64
GAME BOY COLOR
Interplay
BY GAMERS. FOR GAMERS.™
SCI™
MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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Wipeout 3

As a kid you waited for your family to tell you that it was time to open Christmas presents. I know you did because I did too. Every year, I'd wake up early on Christmas Eve, take a nap in the evening, and wake up just in time to open presents at midnight. But Christmas comes earlier than expected for *Wipeout* fans. Life is good—I have my *Wipeout 3* and I'm happy. Psygnosis didn't bust this one out as quickly as anticipated; but it's here now so I have a little less to complain about.



Wipeout 3 was one of the few games I managed to play at this year's E3. Delayed as it was, *Wipeout 3* still looked like a hot game. And though sequels have the potential to be disappointing, I can't say that about *Wipeout 3*, which has shattered all my expectations. First things first, that nasty habit of coming to a complete halt when a vehicle grazes a wall is gone. Unless you totally smash into a wall, your craft isn't losing all its speed. So no more "Hey, I went from first to last place in the blink of an eye." Control (analog and digital) doesn't get any better than this. I don't know if Psygnosis modified the control to adjust with the velocity, but it remains tight, if not tighter, at higher speeds. No more running into walls because of your speed either. Tight control means added precision when using weapons like the opponent-eliminating Plasma Shot—the weapon that exemplifies "thug tactics." The newly introduced weapons are useful as well. Stealth mode rocks, especially in 2-player mode. Wait until you see the look on your buddy's face when he goes from first to second because of an invisible driver. Older weapons have been enhanced; the Autopilot for example won't cut out during a corner—it'll maintain until it's safe to disengage.





Track designs, while diverse, are much improved from anything we've seen before in the series. Most tracks tend to be wider than before with only small, tight straightaways. Corners are more forgiving and you don't see too many blind corners or inclines. Indeed, *Wipeout 3* was designed with speed—and nothing but—in mind. Graphically, I have no gripes; I didn't find a single seam out of place.

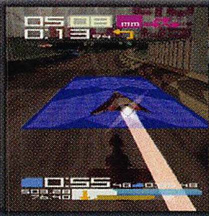
Wipeout 3 has consumed my life. Like its granddaddy, I must get my fill on a daily basis. Have I made you a believer? I have? Perfect, then be a good li'l raver and put down this magazine, and find *Wipeout 3*. Do whatever it takes to play this game. Yes, it's that good. And your PlayStation will love you for it. If you don't, you'll be hearing from Waka...

Cerberus has taken to wandering about the office insulting people, believing himself to be in "stealth" mode.















let's be friends

REVIEW	CERBERUS: It's all about Plasma	Developer - Psygnosis Publisher - Psygnosis	1-2 Players Available Now	Viewpoint Score: 98













It Never Fails

It happens every month…just as we're closing an issue on a super-tight deadline, one game that we **have** to include comes in at the 11th hour. This month that game is Capcom's *Dino Crisis*—not a bad way to round out an issue (and cause a nice, fat printing delay… I can hear Joe D. screaming already, <sigh>)…

"Gimme Extra Survival, Hold the Horror"

I'll not bore you with every bit of minutia regarding the story once again, but here's a (very) brief re-counting if you missed the preview and have been living under a paleolithic shale deposit: you are Regina, super agent extraordinaire. You're on Ibis Island, trying to discover what happened to Dr. Kirk and his ultimate energy source experiment. Imagine her surprise when the island turns out to be overrun by dinosaurs… and we're not talking happy dinos of The Land Before Time variety (think Carnosaur). Now you need to find Dr. Kirk and get off the island without being devoured by a cast of disgruntled extras from *Jurassic Park*.

Unlike its predecessors (*RE* & *RE2*), *DC* features a much more acute action-element. Instead of trying to solve (albeit basic) puzzles you'll spend most of the game running from or gunning down a host of raptors and

DINO CRISIS

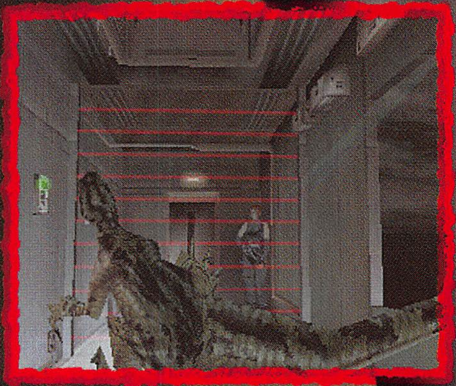
Viewpoint Score :87	Developer - Capcom	1 Player	ECM: Steven Spielberg and Michael
	Publisher - Capcom	Available Now	Crichton, meet Shinji Mikami…

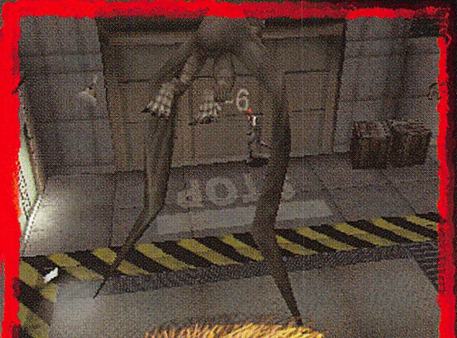
R REVIEW

PlayStation









one very anti-social T-Rex. This is certainly a welcome change of pace from a genre that is generally about trying to scare you and not lead you on a *Contra*-esque mission to the death. Mind you, it's not like you'll be running down hallway after hallway laying down a swath of bullets bringing death to everything scaley, but at least the focus is squarely on bloodletting.

Not that there isn't a puzzle or two to keep things interesting. But if you thought *RE's* 'mind benders' were easy, well, let's just say you can leave your brain on the shelf for this one. Outside of the 'move the boxes with the crane' sequence (I blame the problems with that on lack of sleep, not my inability to count, Dango), there'll be no need to get your strategy game-playing friends to help you on this one. Even Waka's limited intellect (further eroded by marathon sessions of *EverQuest*) dealt admirably with this one.

Some nice gameplay elements have made their way in as well. Just been given the People's Elbow by a particularly surly raptor (usually involves your arm trapped in its jaws as it tosses you around like Shidoshi during a re-enactment of *WWF Raw*)? Not only do you now have to worry about having a life bar that resembles a thermometer reading in Buffalo during the month of January, but there's the nasty side-effect (and very real possibility) of bleeding to death. To that end, you'll need to find as many hemostats as possible to keep blood loss to a minimum. Certainly keeps things interesting as Regina will limp and groan as the hemorrhaging continues till she joins Wesker and Forest 'crow food' in Capcom heaven. The added quick-turnaround button also comes in handy when you're getting mowed down by a pack of excited raptors; just turn, shoot and repeat—just remember that you still have to dodge the marauding raptors (stand still too long and you're a Fury-style SAG-bag).

Overall, the game controls a little bit like you might think a slightly faster-paced *RE* would. Sometimes

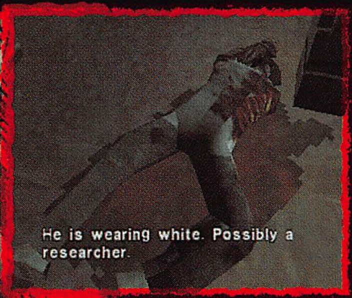
















it's irritating when the 'steers like a car' running inherent in the *RE* series winds up causing you to make too wide a turn and the raptors do a little run-'em-off-the-road action and proceed to pepper Regina with tail swipes and, naturally, limb-shearing bites.



An SGI in my PS?!

OK, OK, so it's not going to re-define graphics on the PlayStation, nor is it going to cause you to run out of your room and scream "Capcom is the greatest 3D graphics powerhouse in the world!!" However, the game looks good. Each dinosaur is amazingly well modeled, with solid textures and that handy skinning technique that all the cool kids are using so that there are **no** seams to be seen on the dinos or the human characters. Weapon effects are decent, and overall it's a very solid graphical package. I, however, would have preferred that the game had stayed pre-rendered as it makes for a better overall package and certainly makes for a more tense experience (minus, of course, your first encounter with the T-Rex... I had to reach for the nearest defibrillator after that—makes the 'dogs through the window' sequence in *RE* seem like an episode of the *Banana Splits*, <urk>). After that initial shock, though, you'll ast least be a little more wary of thier game.



So where does *DC* fit in the Survival Horror pantheon? While it's a pretty damn good game in its own right, I'm just a bit more excited about *RE3* and its wicked water and fire effects. The action element is a welcome change of pace and the overall adventure is exciting but this one's going to appeal to the little brothers of the world a lot more than hard-core Fangoria fans (dinosaurs + little boys = big sales). Certainly a respectable entry in Capcom's line-up but nothing you're gonna remember über-nostalgically in five years... "Hey, Eggo, remember the time I killed that pack of raptors with only one hemostat and a toothpick..."

When ECM isn't masquerading as a woman in video games, he's out with the girls shopping at the Gap , making fun of Lara and her 'thunder thighs.'



Have you ever punished your dog for something (usually involving bodily fluids and a leg) it did wrong? After rebuking ol' Spot, did you notice how henceforth it feared you? That's what EA did with the gaming community when releasing *Street Skater*, a game that makes the entire *GameFan* staff cringe. So what happens when another publisher decides to give the skating genre a go? Most of us wince in fear... well, not really. For the record, *Street Skater* wasn't *that* bad... just under-developed. If I had to make a comparison, I'd say that *Street Skater* was a meat and potatoes *Top Skater* clone, while *Tony Hawk* is more the Spago's of the genre.

More than a decade's passed since I stepped on a deck and trucks. My board lies deep within the confines of my garage, laying somewhere next to my metal cleats, shin guards, and a beat up pair of Vans. Now, whenever possible, I make it over to the Vans Skate Park at the Block in Orange, California. Because nothing's better than watching the park's denizens do what they do best—bails, it's all about the bails.

Neversoft's able crew of seasoned designers, programmers, and artists wants to change the way we think of skateboarding games. Or should I say they want us to remember how skateboarding games used to be? Neversoft must've been inspired by greats like *Skate or Die* and *720°*, with its off-center joystick. *Tony Hawk* is a very good start—way too good, even. What makes *Tony Hawk* so damn awesome, aside from its killer visuals, is how indescribably fun it is to play. Unlike *Thrasher* (a skateboarding game on the opposite end of the spectrum), *Tony Hawk* is a "pick-up-and-go" affair. No insane learning curve—not initially, anyway. But don't pop a blood vessel—*Tony Hawk* has loads of technique. Your arcade reflexes better be at their peak if you wanna see Roswell.

Each skater can pull off up to two dozen different tricks that can be linked together for an infinite number of combos and points. A Special meter at the top left of the screen will turn green then yellow as tricks are performed and landed. Once the Special meter is yellow, you have a limited amount of time to perform your skater's signature move. Tony Hawk has his now-famous 900. More tricks, difficult ones particularly, will increase the longevity of the Special meter.

Tony Hawk's PRO SKATER



There are two types of areas to skate in: trick areas and speed runs. The Warehouse located in Woodland Hills, modeled after *GameFan's* own skate-park, is a small, isolated area with a ton of plywood for you to pull your best Ollie. Burnside is yet another skate-park, competition-style, full of pools and quarter pipes to occupy your skating time. While the Mall is like the courses we played in *Top Skater*. You've got one shot to make a good run. If you mess up, you can turn around and try again, but would Tony mess up?

Unlike *Thrasher*, two players can give it a go simultaneously or alternately. No one can argue that this point alone makes *Tony Hawk* a much more reasonable choice for those of us who don't like to share. If only I had the room to list more reasons why you should buy *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*... It's a great game, and I haven't felt this sure or excited about a game in a very, very long time. The cliché meter will go off the chart with this comment, but if you only buy one game this year it has to be *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*.

Cerberus pulled his crusty old skateboard out of hiding, but the only tricks he remembers are the faceplant, the compound fracture, and the difficult nutcracker.

R REVIEW	CERBERUS: SKATE OR DIE!	DEVELOPER - NEVERSOFT PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION	1-2 PLAYERS AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 98

Interview with Chris Rausch
Designer for Tony Hawk's Pro Skater

Chris Rausch, a self-professed skater, is one of a team of designers on *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater.* He's responsible for a lot of what you see in the game as well as the final stage, Roswell.

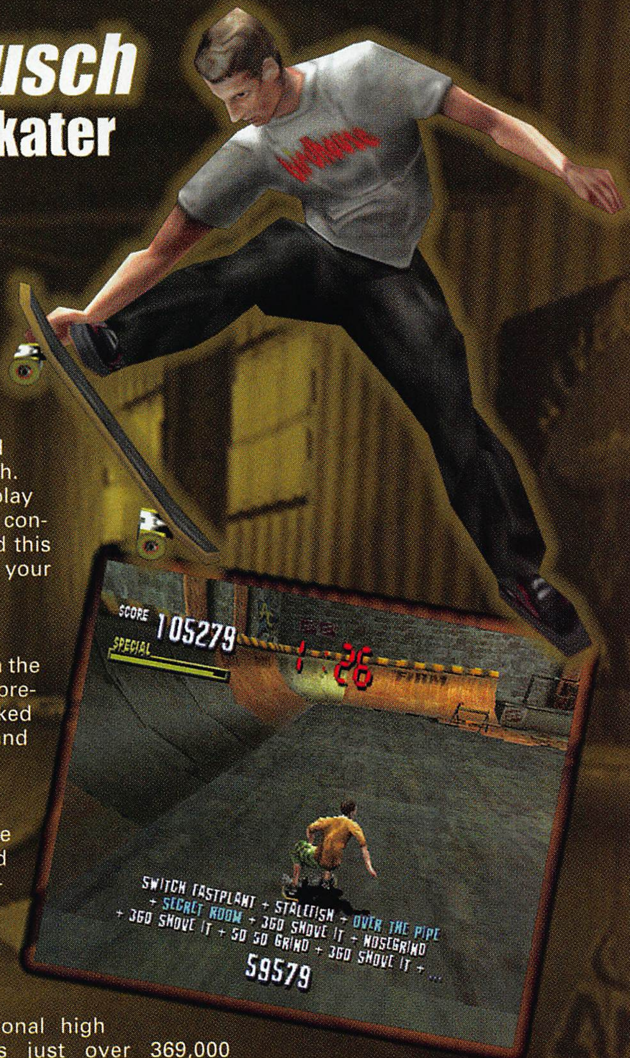
GameFan: What were you trying to accomplish with *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* and do you feel that you accomplished what you were looking for?
Chris Rausch: The goal behind *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* was to hopefully establish the mark by which all other skating games will be measured. With the feedback we've received, based on focus testing and the demo alone, it appears that we've done just that. It's awesome to hear the things that people are saying after having seen the game, because we really worked our asses off to make it what it is. As for what didn't make it... not much. Anything that didn't make it will come out via feedback from the people who play the game. And we have, and still will be listening to that feedback for future considerations. We know of a few things that we wish we could have included this time around, but they're easily forgotten once you pop that disk in and go for your first run.

GF: Would you say the game centers around Tony or all the skaters overall?
CR: The game is definitely about ALL of the skaters involved. Tony's name on the front grabs attention because it's so widely recognized, but it also further represents the quality of the guys that we have included. They were all hand picked by Tony himself. They really are some of the absolute top pros out there and are all skaters who have developed huge followings and fan bases.

GF: What is your favorite stage, character, and trick combination?
CR: From a gamer's perspective, my favorite stage would probably be the Warehouse, simply because it's so easy to get into and develop cool lines and combos. We've come up with some trick combos in that level that can produce insane scores. The current known top score for the game was set in that level and is held by Scott Pease (our Producer) at 411,000+ points. My personal high is just over 369,000 points, also set in that level. From a skater's perspective, my favorites would definitely be the levels that house real-life skate spots, like Burnside and EMB (R.I.P.).

My favorite skater in the game would have to be Geoff Rowley. I even ride his board in real life, albeit very poorly. I dig doing Darkslides in the game with him.

My favorite trick combo is definitely a variation of the one that Scott used to set that insane score. But we'll reveal it later, once the game is on shelves. We want to see what kind of lines and scores people can come up with on their own, perhaps even topping ours.









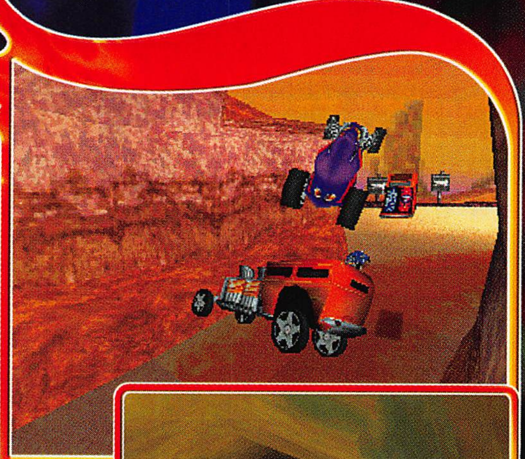
GF: What do you see for a possible sequel?
CR: I see it being called "Chris Rausch's Pro Skater". But then it would only sell about 3 copies; one to myself, one to my wife, and one to my mom. So I guess that wouldn't be such a good idea. Seriously, we'd love to do a sequel and basically just go for more of everything. More tricks, more skaters, more levels, more money... errr...uh, I mean more music, and more sponsors.

GF: Do you think the shoes make the man or the bearings?
CR: That depends on whether or not the shoe is your own pro model. As for bearings, it was Swiss back in the day, and it's Swiss now.

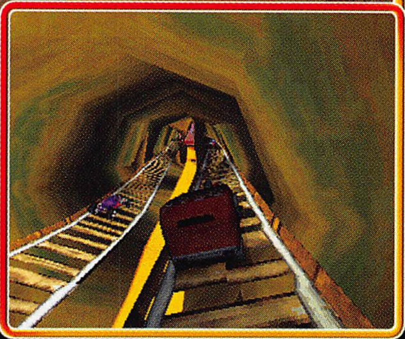
Special thanks to Chris Rausch for answering our questions. For anyone interested, Neversoft's website is undergoing a huge facelift with a possible Tony Hawk's Pro Skater *scoreboard. Check it out at www.neversoft.com*





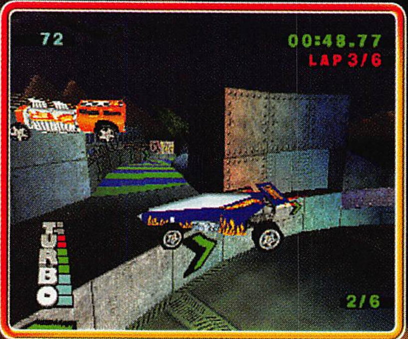






Coming around the corner, I know this'll be a close one. No turbos left, and a gang of cars between me and the goal, with only half a lap of track to go. There's a jump coming up, and I hit it at top speed. A seemingly slow-motion backflip of my Indy 500 car nets me two whole turbos. Using one, I pass four cars; the other I'm saving for the big leap to come. Right before the ramp, I gun the turbo, giving me extra momentum as I pull a 720° Tornado while crossing the Chasm of Death and passing the leader in the process. Using the five turbos from that trick to close it out, I cross the finish line and breathe a sigh of relief. Never a dull moment in *Hot Wheels Turbo Racing*.

The game's fun, provided you give it a chance and **play it**. Let's just get this out of the way now, it's not a serious racer. Don't expect realistic physics or handling; some of the tracks have areas where you can ride on the ceilings and walls a la *Rollcage* (although I wouldn't recommend it). What you should expect are countless stunts (720° spins, barrel rolls, back-flips, triple somersaults with an inverted twist), neck-and-neck racing, and lots of adrenaline-pumping, high speed crashes.





Spinning buzz-saws, crushing meat-grinders, and thundering pincers are just some of the hazards you'll avoid. The tracks themselves range from a Transylvania-esque landscape to an active volcano. Of course there's also classic Hot Wheels elements on the tracks such as loop-the-loops and crisscross intersections (always a danger when you're pushing 150 mph). And then there's the cars—Hot Wheels cars! If you grew up with them like I did, then they're an added bonus. Every mystery car you unlock could be one that you owned as a kid.

The way *Hot Wheels* plays, you're constantly boosting and replenishing your turbos with tricks. Don't worry. If you screw up a barrel roll and end up sliding on the ground upside-down, just hit the "panic" button and your car gets righted instantly. Of course you'll have to build up speed again, but you're not penalized too severely for living dangerously.

Even better, the game's engine is pretty solid, and the music consists of licensed artists such as Metallica (albeit the new Metallica... <sigh>), Primus, and Mix Master Mike. The only knock I have on this game is the somewhat lengthy loading time between races. Other than that, *Hot Wheels* is fun—something which many games aren't, unfortunately.



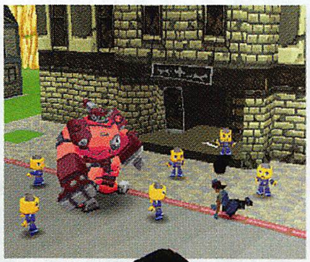
Eggo is entertaining thoughts of visiting Ebay to see how much Hot Wheels cars go for nowadays, but is afraid he'll break down and cry if he does.



Hot Wheels Turbo Racing

R REVIEW	EGGO: How much'll you give me for my Red Baron car?	Developer - Stormfront Publisher - Electronic Arts	1-2 Players Available 4th Qtr.	Viewpoint Score :85

The Misadventures of Tron Bonne

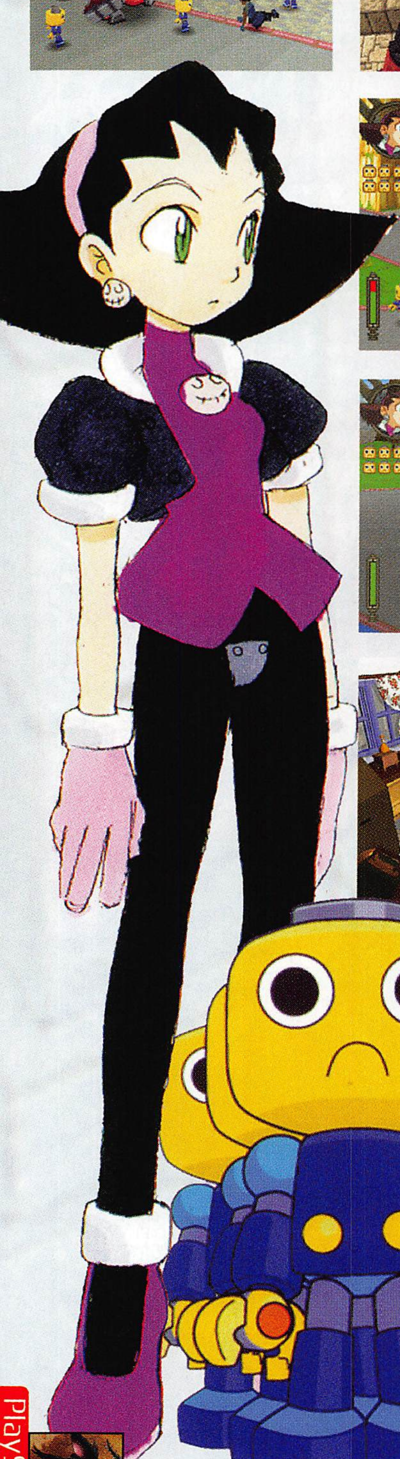










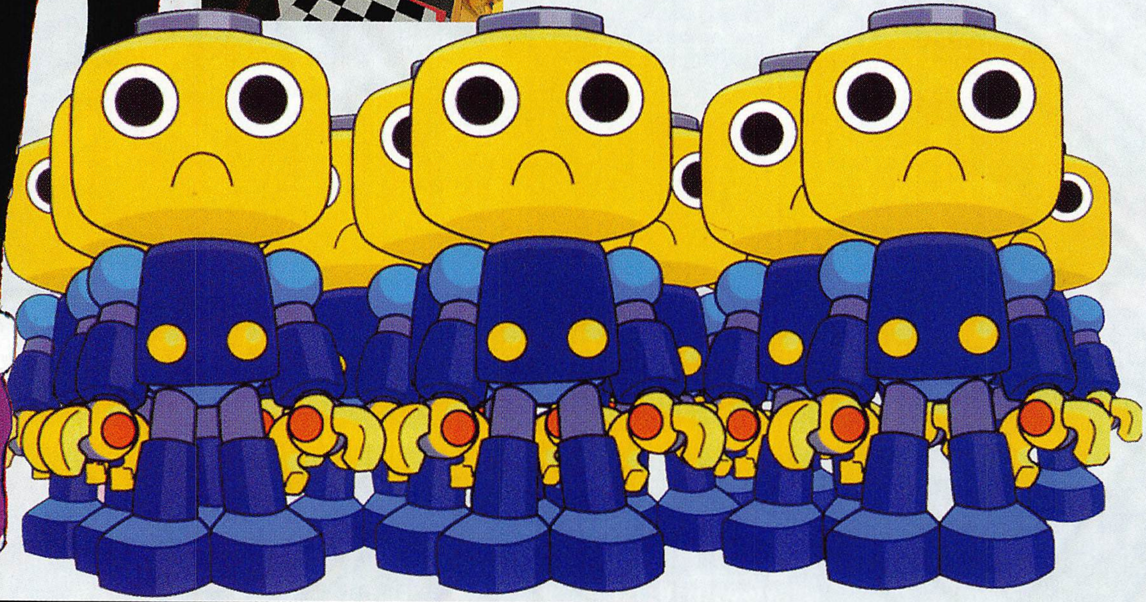


Tron Bonne, *MegaMan Legend*'s femme fatale, is back for more. This time she isn't facing off against Mega, she's in her own kooky adventure—or should I say misadventure? Back with not only a serious suit of armor, she also has her troop of Lego—I mean, Servbots—to keep her company. Borrowing the engine Capcom developed for *Legends*, *Tron Bonne* is a refreshing break from the norm for a *MegaMan* game.

Don't expect an epic story because you're not getting one. What you are getting is a side story detailing the Bonne family and why Tron became the baddie she is today. The story is advanced with in-game graphics and the aid of voice actors. If I didn't know it, I'd think this was a Saturday morning cartoon. I loved Saturday morning cartoons as a kid; I'd wake up way too early to watch Daffy, Bugs, Speed Racer and the rest. The simplistic character designs are nice, but what separate these from anything else are the facial expressions and personalities given to them by the artists at Capcom.

Instead of following the same formula, Capcom has made *Tron Bonne* a game all its own. Sure, a lot of what you'll see and hear screams *MegaMan Legends*, but there's a lot to look at here. Tron's Servbots add a whole lotta fun to the game. These tiny automatons do your bidding under any and all circumstances. Need them to steal some loot from an empty house? They're there. See an object unreachable to you? Servbots will find a way to it. Fighting a super flying death machine capable of blowing up the planet? They love that stuff. Aim at a target and the Servbots will work their magic. Of course, this isn't always as successful as one would like. Sometimes they get a swift kick in the posterior, knocking them out cold for a short while, accompanied by a hilarious dizzy animation.

MegaMan Legends 2 is scheduled to hit sometime in 2000. *The Misaventures of Tron Bonne* will likely occupy your time until *Legends* gets a U.S. sequel. *Tron Bonne* is just a side story before the real thing. I can't say it'll be a bad pastime. Tron and her mechanical brood know how to party. **C**



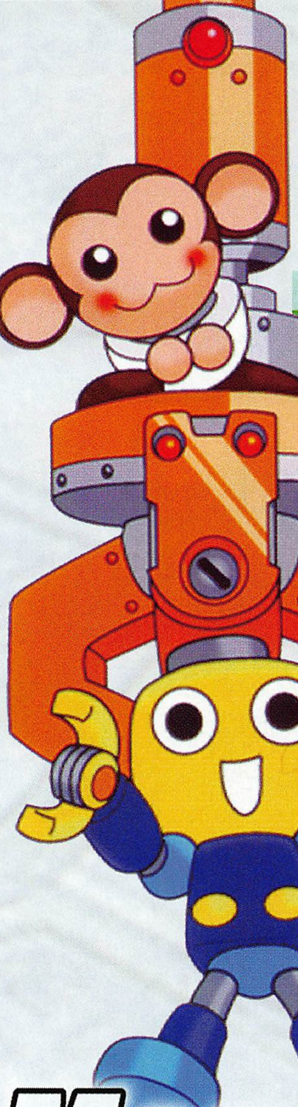


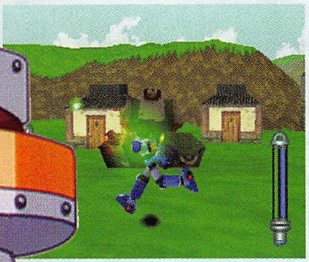
P PREVIEW	CERBERUS: LOOK AT THE CUTE 'LIL LEGO MEN!	DEVELOPER - CAPCOM PUBLISHER - CAPCOM	1 PLAYER AVAILABLE 1ST QTR. '00

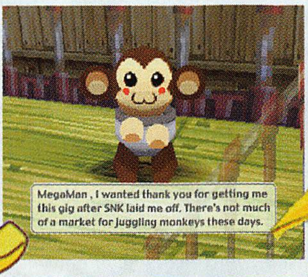
I've said it before and I'll say it again: Capcom sure keeps its prized possessions busy. Jill, Ryu, Strider, and MegaMan are all still in action and getting a lot of it. Jill is back this fall in *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* and Ryu returns in *SFIII: Third Strike*, *Street Fighter EX 2 Plus*, and possibly *Marvel vs. Capcom 2*. We saw a comeback from Strider Hiryu in *MvC* and soon, *Strider 2*. MegaMan is just as tied up as the rest of the crew with *RockMan*, *MegaMan Legends 2*, and yet another appearance in *MvC2* as well as *SNK vs. Capcom*. It's a good year to be a Capcom character.

A large segment of the gaming press panned the first *MegaMan Legends* because of what they thought to be odd control. It's time for a li'l *MegaMan Legends* 101... back-pedaling and walking forward are done by standard methods, Up is forward and Down is back. Sidestepping is accomplished by pressing the D-pad left or right. Turning is done by using the L1 and R1 buttons. This was the main grievance with *MegaMan Legends*. What most gaming editors didn't know or mention was that this could be changed in the option screen; yes, sidestepping could be assigned to the shoulder buttons. Live and learn, I say.

The awful voice acting lessened the fun of the game, yet I thoroughly enjoyed *MegaMan Legends*. A different story full of new characters and enemies was more than enough to suck me in. And gameplay reminiscent of *Xybots* was a bonus





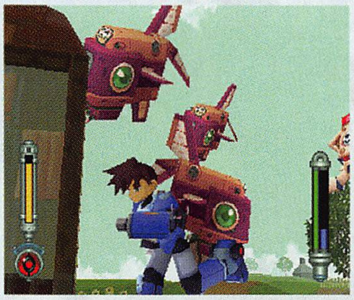






MegaMan Legends II





for a *MegaMan* fan like myself.

Well, Mega has gained some powerful attacks and evasive maneuvers since his last venture. The blue bomber and team are more powerful than ever. This new adventure's script won't suffer from the horrible fate as the original, since Capcom is improving the voice acting department.

We'll have to wait and see how the audio turns out, but what I do know is that *Legends 2* has a sharper, more polished look than its predecessor. Also, like *The Misadventures of Tron Bonne*, *MegaMan Legends 2* gives us that cartoonish look that we like so much. Solid visuals and improved gameplay put this one at the top of the list for games to look forward to. **C**

Developer - Capcom	1 Player	Cerberus: Time	P Preview
Publisher - Capcom	Available 1st Qtr '00	to rock and roll!	











There are two things that kids can't get enough of... candy and dinosaurs. The latter won't cause gingivitis, so parents are more apt to give their kids toy dinosaurs instead of a bar of taffy. You know, dinosaur toys: miniature figurines of carnivorous lizards that once walked the earth destroying and killing everything in sight—isn't parenting great? While attempts have been made in the past to cash in on the dino craze, nothing in recent memory has made it for consoles. The last one I can remember is Dreamworks' *Lost World* for PlayStation—something I'm still seeking therapy over.

Cool Trivia Alert! One of the best-conceived dinosaur games was *DinoBlades*. Designed by Robb Alvey of Virgin Interactive, it was intended for the ill-fated 3DO. However, *DinoBlades* ran into some legal issues with *RollerBlade* and never came to fruition, but I digress...

Primal Rage is an inevitable candidate for comparison. Both *Primal Rage* and *Warpath: Jurassic Park* feature animals from a different era clashing like tidal waves. The primary difference is that *Warpath: Jurassic Park* has true-to-life dinosaurs and the huge *Jurassic Park* license. That means that *Warpath* will benefit from authentic scenes from both motion pictures in its locales and shell screens.

Polygonal single-skinned lizards range from 700 to 900 polys a piece and look great. The first time I saw *Warpath*, I wasn't sure what to say. At the time, the backgrounds didn't have the *Jurassic Park* license, but the dinos looked amazing, even in their early state. Now each stage boasts the same high quality as its reptilian resident.

As of this writing, Black Ops continues to tune gameplay and combos. If all goes as planned, I'll be juggling Eggo to oblivion with my faithful Styrac or Triceratops. Combos are of the *Bloody Roar* and *Tekken* persuasion. Keep your fingers crossed that *Warpath: Jurassic Park* looks and plays the way it should, and maybe if you're nice enough, Black Ops will give us a sequel on the next PlayStation (sorry no *Warpath: Jurassic Park* for Dreamcast). C

WARPATH JURASSIC PARK



PREVIEW	CERBERUS: WHERE'S VERTIGO?	DEVELOPER - BLACK OPS PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS	1-2 PLAYERS AVAILABLE WINTER



Crash'll have a full four games before St. Nick makes the rounds this year. Now Spyro's only seen one game, and the firebreather needs to stretch his wings. In all honesty, did you expect Sony to not take full advantage of its other sickeningly cute pseudo-mascot? The makers of *Disruptor* are burning the midnight oil on Spyro's second adventure as I write this. Considering the success and popularity of the first, can you blame them?

Spyro (2): Ripto's Rage! kicks off shortly after Spyro's first quest. The life of a hero can be draining for a young dragon, and Spyro's long overdue for a vacation. Unfortunately for him, a short angry man—no, not ECM—is causing muchos problemas. Somehow, Spyro gets pulled into this mess and must do what he does best in a whopping 40-hour quest, and I'm not kidding. According to the ultra-cool peeps at Insomniac, it takes them 40 hours to complete *Spyro (2)*, and they know exactly what they're doing and where to go. If that's true, you and I can expect at least double that our first time through.

The little critter has something to smile about since the new Spyro engine is speedier and more efficient than Insomniac's old code. Usually efficiency or increased speed are things you're not aware of. Maybe it's a minor change that only a PlayStation analyzer program will catch, maybe there's more calculations for the aging PlayStation to juggle, but increased performance is commonly overlooked. You'll be hard-pressed not to notice the astounding progression from the original *Spyro*. For one, Spyro moves faster and there's no visible draw-in within most areas.

I see too many games to be impressed easily. Graphically, it takes a lot to get my attention—I might like a game, but still hate its visual presentation. Yet I'm still not over *Spyro (2)'s* Disney-esque look and feel. The characters, structures, and color palette are some of the best in recent memory. Insomniac must have thrown in a box of Crayolas to get the spectrum of colors to look so beautiful.

Spyro's due out before Christmas, most likely Thanksgiving. Only then will we know if he can hold his own against Puff. A bag of new tricks and a huge cartoon world definitely are in his favor. If you wanna catch a glimpse of the game check a potential demo in *CTR: Crash Team Racing.* After this, it'll be time for our spunky dragon to make a trip to the next PlayStation. **C**





Developer - Insomniac	1 Player	CERBERUS: Pretty	P PREVIEW
Publisher - SCEA	Available Winter	fly... for a dragon.	

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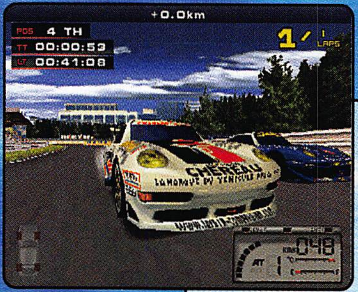
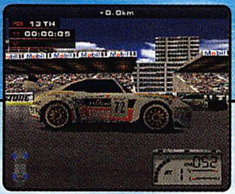
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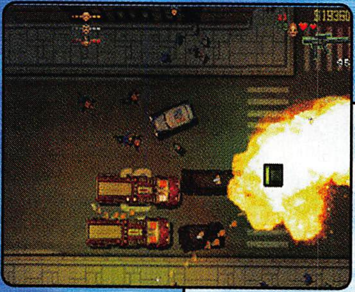
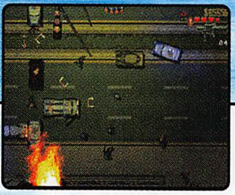


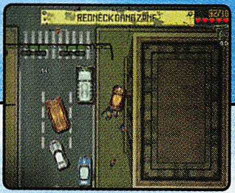
Spiderman (Activision) — Few comic based games have been very good, but Activision turned a head or two at E3 with Spiderman. Take control of Spidey and wack the baddies. Sounds good to me.




Test Drive: Le Mans (Infogrames) — While there are lots of racing games, few have captured the pride and tradition of the racing spirit. Test Drive: Le Mans looks to be a true automobile enthusiast's game.

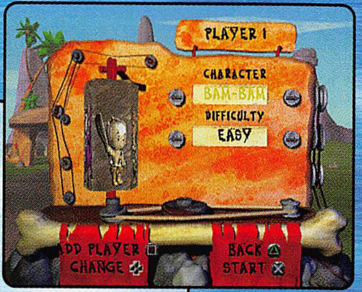






Grand Theft Auto 2 (Take Two) — So, you didn't get enough car-jackings, vehicle bombs, and other sordid activities in GTA? Well, you got a sequel coming with lots more mischief.

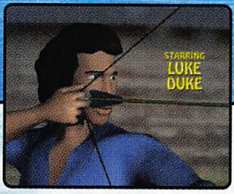


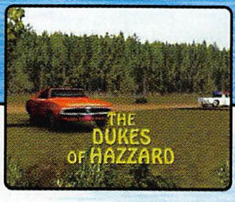


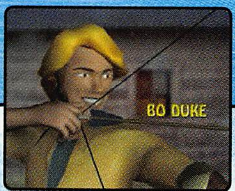


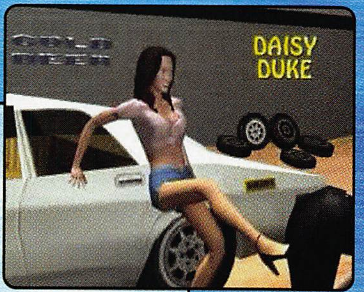
Flintstones Bedrock Bowling (Southpeak Interactive) — No, it's not Fred and Barney going to a late night bowl-a-thon. Take various Flintstones characters, put them on a large bowl, and send them down a path. Weird? Definitely...











Dukes of Hazzard: Racing For Home (Southpeak Interactive) — And who says nobody likes rednecks? The Duke boys are back in their first video game. Look for more next month!

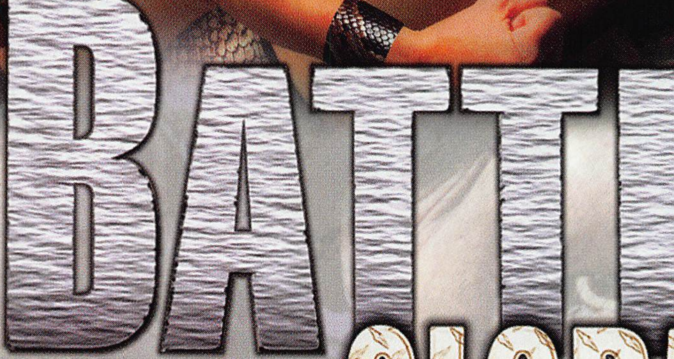

Dreamcast
SEGA



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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Sega Dreamcast

NINTENDO64













Say what you will about the original *Battletanx*, but if it weren't for that game, the coolest television commercial known to man would never have been conceived. The 3DO company simply borrowed Snuggle's (the fabric softener) loveable spokesbear and set him down ever so gently in the middle of exploding tank shells and guided missiles... Now one can only imagine what ingenious marketing campaign 3DO has in store for *BT's* sequel.

The action in *Battletanx 2* picks up five years after nuclear winter nearly wiped out all of mankind. Closely following the *Terminator 2* story line, Griffen Spade (the hero from *BT*) and his wife Madison have spawned a child of great intelligence and unique ability who, like John Conner, plays an integral role in the rebirth of a civilized nation. Rising from the debris and chaos of this "new world," an evil Queenlord has singled out Griffen's offspring. Saving young Brandon won't be easy, as this sinister breed of terrorist scum employs an array of powerful weapons, including a variety of new tanks. Some are very agile, like the Flip-E tank which can easily perform rolls and deadly strafing maneuvers, whereas larger tanks such as the Rhino are better suited for straightforward combat.

3DO must have conducted focus groups with young militia members, because this time around the name of the game is "Everything must die!" No longer will players have to waste their time on useless exploration; action is definitely the focus in *BT2*. Also, the game's

pace has been sped up considerably, and oftentimes players will encounter a ridiculous amount of enemy fire. Shots and explosions ring out from all directions, and that includes taking shrapnel from offshore subs and missile boats. Fortunately for players, leveling most structures will reveal a ton of power-ups from guided missiles and grenades to even more exotic weapons like Plasma Bolts—these green energy beams will continue to bounce off adjacent buildings and objects until finally impacting on enemy craft... very cool stuff!

Like many N64 games, the original *BT* suffered from muddy graphics and a poor frame-rate. *BT2*, on the other hand, features cleaner textures, more impressive explosion and weapon effects and an improved frame-rate in both the multi-player game and single player campaign. But it was the amount of added multi-player functions (seven in all) that really impressed. Four tanks can duke it out in a simple deathmatch or choose to turn up the intensity in frenzy mode, where players race to rescue lost Queenlords.

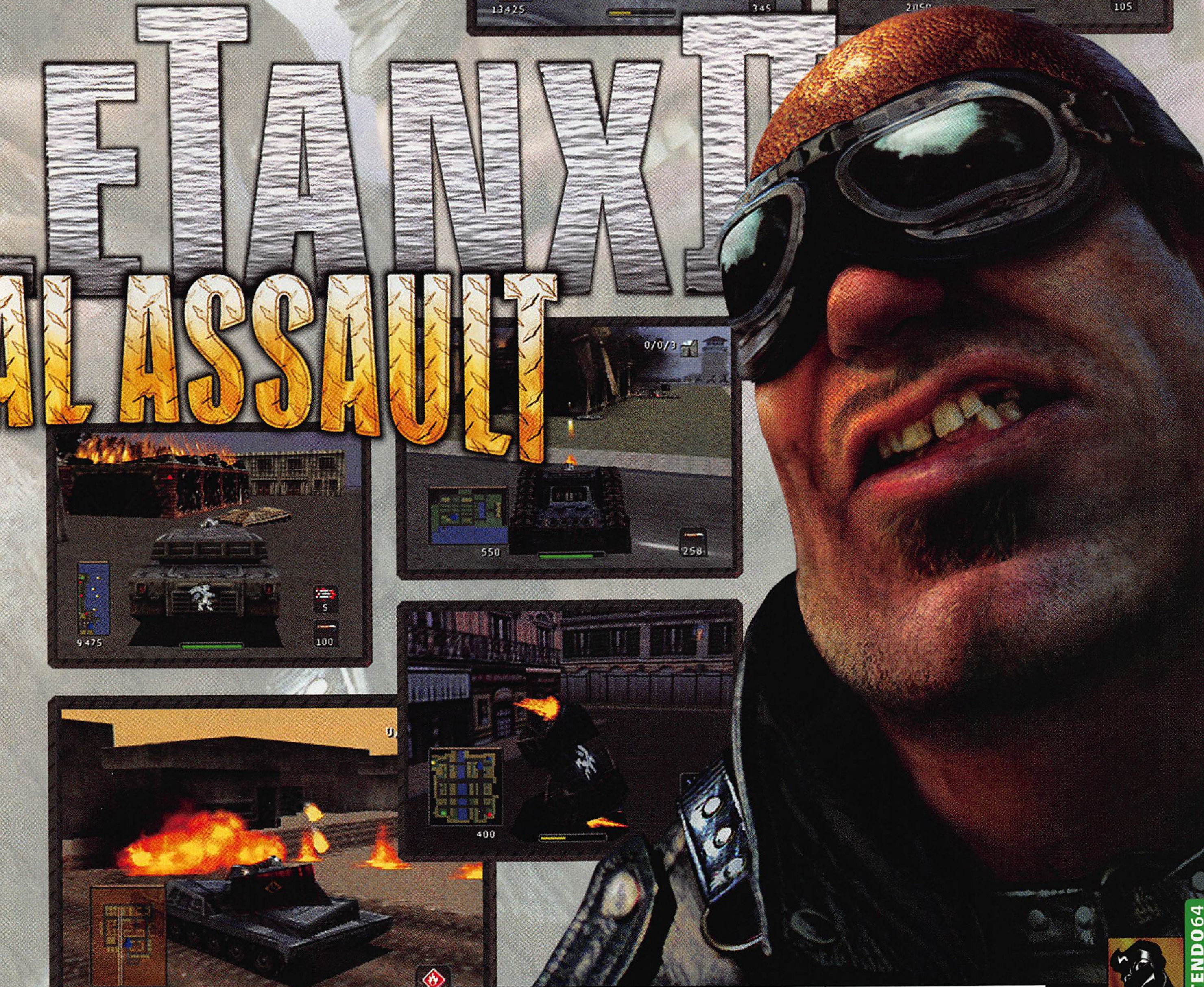
Tank games are rare. Even more rare is the prospect that you'll run into a good tank game. *BT2* is definitely an exception to the rule. Besides, its not like you can afford Namco's *Tokyo Wars* arcade machine... right? Right?!

Fury is considering stealing a tank from an Army Reserve base in San Diego and taking it for a spin on the LA freeways... wait, didn't someone already do that?









Viewpoint Score	:92	Developer - 3DO	1-4 Players	FURY: Snuggle Bear's gonna die... again!
		Publisher - 3DO	Available Nov.	

REVIEW


ROAD RASH
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CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB


180 MPH Slap in the Face, Anyone?
Special multi-player modes for up to 4 players Including Deathmatch, Cop Mode and Tag
200 miles of interconnected tracks and environments
Intense pack brawling, including grudges and alliances
Thrashin' soundtrack featuring Sugar Ray, The Mermen and more
Over 25 bikes and characters to choose from
New weapons and moves like the dreaded spoke jam
COMING SOON
NINTENDO64
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For those not up on their Eggo history, sit back, relax, and relive a moment of my past here. I loved *Dune 2* on PC, played *WarCraft II* on the PC for over two years on Kali, and dabbled in *StarCraft* on PC for a while (though the Battlenet ladder took the fun out of playing when people took it too seriously). So yes, I am a huge supporter of Blizzard's games (*Diablo II* beta test, baby!), but I said this about *WarCraft II* and *Diablo* on PS, and I'll say it about *StarCraft* on N64: Most PC games don't translate well to console!

Maybe it makes sense mathematically for the marketing types: Big Seller on PC + Quick Console Port = More Cash. But the gamer is the one getting short-changed with an emaciated game which pales in comparison to Blizzard's true vision. I know, not everyone has a $2,000 game machine, but some titles should not be ported to console in the first place.

For what it's worth, Mass Media has offered N64 gamers a lot of bang for their buck: *StarCraft* and *Brood War* missions and units are here, as are the expected multi-player modes (versus or co-op), which are handled with a split-screen interface. Now do I really need to point out how silly it is to have a versus multi-player split-screen? Recon, one of the keys to an RTS, is rendered obsolete if you can see your opponent's position and what he's doing at all times. Oh, he's building stealth units? Better get Observers. Scouts? Better answer with Scourge. Expansion just started? Prime time to attack. They just took the strategy out of a real-time strategy game!

On the other hand, if you play a co-operative game with a human teammate, then split-screen is perfectly acceptable; at least there it's beneficial to see what your partner's doing. So you're wondering, "What would you have them do since a link cable and modem are not an option?" Drop the versus multi-player mode entirely. Why waste valuable development time on a game option which is basically useless?

StarCraft



I have no problem with *StarCraft* as a one-player game. The core of it is there: excellent gameplay, good graphics, and an incredible story for a RTS game. But the single-player *StarCraft* isn't enough to warrant a purchase; and if you're looking to buy this game to crush your friends at an RTS which everyone's raving about, forget it.

Eggo is not looking forward to reviewing Diablo II *on the PlayStation.*







NINTENDO64

REVIEW	EGGO: SPLIT-SCREEN RTS? WHAT IS YOUR MAJOR MALFUNCTION?	DEVELOPER - MASS MEDIA/BLIZZARD PUBLISHER - NINTENDO	1-2 PLAYERS AVAILABLE OCT.	VIEWPOINT SCORE :70



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Weld Doors Shut
Tape Fender to Chassis
Strap Down Hood
Renew Life Insurance Policy
DESTRUCTION DERBY 64™
Hit the Road!
Get into 24 Vehicles, from Stock Cars to Hot Rods to Ambulances.
High Speed Chaos!
Up to 12 Opponents Battle Simultaneously on a Dozen Arenas and Tracks.
Multiplayer Mayhem!
Deathmatch, Destruction Race, Bomb Tag, and Capture the Flag Modes.
Hardcore Demolition Action!
Exploding Cars.
Realistic Damage.
NINTENDO64
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
SMASHING GOOD FUN
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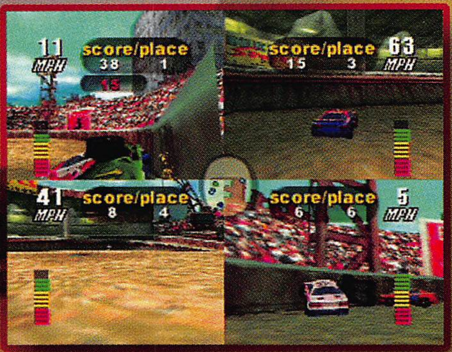


INSANE.
FRENZIED.
TOTAL
TAG-TEAM
CHAOS!
ARCADE 100% PERFECT
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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Here, in the hallowed Halls of *GameFan*, we do our best to review games with the keenest eye. Like health inspectors, we examine every game under close scrutiny. Some get our blessing as "must buy or we'll pound your head in," while others bear the unfortunate seal of "avoid at all costs or we'll pound your head in." In this day and age of video games, the great majority of titles fall into the morass known as the "middle of the road." There's nothing special about games in this zone, but at least they don't add to the pile of games in the dung heap. And for The People's Dango, one of the hardest decisions is reviewing a game which teeters between the gray area somewhere between crap and mediocrity. While I search high and low for features which put *Destruction Derby 64* in the average category, small things continually steer this game right back into the ranks of the rancid.

The concept looks promising to start: Race your vehicle on various tracks, score points by crashing into other cars, and keep this up until your car gets totaled. Some tracks are complete circuits, with cars racing in both directions, so you run the risk of head-on collisions with half the participants. On these tracks, you also must worry about meeting checkpoints, in addition to watching for oncoming traffic. Other tracks are enclosed fields where it's a free-for-all of car-crashing carnage. The physics engine is pretty good; collisions look realistic; and the dents on your car attest to the damage you receive and dish out with every collision. It's always exciting to have four players compete in four different multi-player modes ranging from the standard crash test racing, to an interesting version of Capture the Flag.

So how does a game with many good ideas slip below average? Well, for starters the visuals in the game are not great, good, or fair... just average for your typical N64 game. As mentioned above, the crashes look pretty cool, and the flame effects are actually good,







DESTRUCTION DERBY 64™

REPEATED PLAYING OF THIS GAME MAY CAUSE SERIOUS HEAD INJURY.



but there are some horrid lighting effects that look out of place. Plus, the frame-rate can go from pretty smooth to choppy as hell in less than six seconds. But the main reason why this game is so substandard is that it's just not fun to play. Your vehicle controls fine but the novelty of smashing into cars for points gets old really fast. Even with the unique head-on races, you can drive for a long time without hitting opposing cars.

While I applaud the extra multi-player game modes, I just don't see where the fun is after repeatedly smashing more and more cars. Speaking of cars, while there are 12 unlockable cars in the game, you only start off with one basic car for much of the game (even though it looks like you have several cars to start, they're all the same vehicle). *Demolition Derby 64* promised to be a new type of racing game, but with visual problems, gameplay that tires quickly, and no element of lasting fun, it's as enjoyable as driving a car with a broken radiator.



Always the Good Samaritan, Dangohead volunteered at the National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration, which has since saved millions of dollars in their cranial crash test program.



R REVIEW	DANGOHEAD: I'LL SHOW YOU A HEAD-ON COLLISION... <HEADBUTT>!	DEVELOPER - LOOKING GLASS PUBLISHER - THQ	1-4 PLAYERS AVAILABLE SEP.	VIEWPOINT SCORE :69



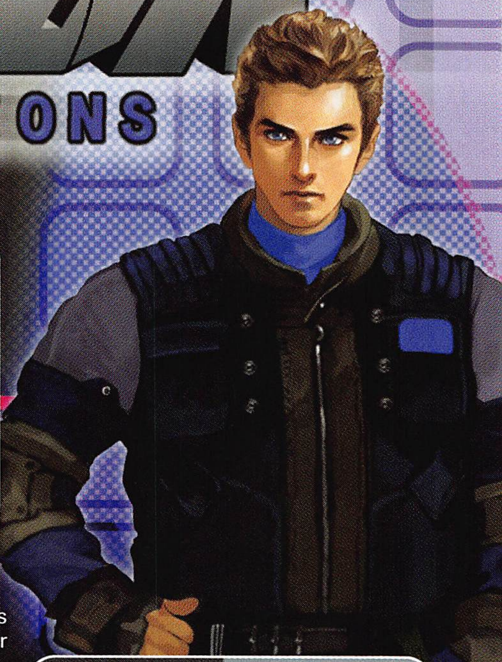
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WINBACK

COVERT OPERATIONS







Koei. A name synonymous with ultra, stat-heavy military sims such as *Nobunaga's Ambition*, *Romance of the 3 Kingdoms*, *P.T.O.* and so on and so forth—think of them as the company of the hard-core pocket protector set. Not that I don't enjoy re-unifying China on occasion (I believe my Saturn backup RAM has *R3K* indelibly burned into its memory), but they're generally not my first choice in game developers; hey, when your credo is "death to all..." However, in the hopes of capturing a larger part of the mainstream market, they've done some amazingly un-Koei-like things in the recent past. First with the PS fighting games *Dynasty Warriors* (Nobunaga meets Ryu) and the *Dragon Ball*-esque *Destrega*. Now they've got *Winback*—the N64's answer to *Metal Gear Solid* and *Syphon Filter*. Do they have what it takes to make Solid Snake and Gabriel Logan grip their pistols a little tighter (oy!), or can they relax, secure in the knowledge that the PS is the only home for Tactical Espionage?

In typical 'one man against the world' fashion (is there any other way to go?), you'll see your covert operations squad members bail as their plane is knocked out of the sky—and watch as your squad leader goes to meet his maker... apparently. After that, you're thrust into an onslaught of gun-toting baddies out for blood—and they should probably be sporting some very solid Euro-trash accents. While the environments are more compact than those of *Syphon Filter*, they help serve to keep the 'death to all' quotient acceptably high.

Gameplay is utterly brilliant, with shoot, reload, duck, and the ever-popular 'slink along a wall, pop-out, cap baddie, duck back, re-load, repeat' move. And that's what sets *Winback* apart from either of the two PS titles: The interface is absolutely amazing, giving unprecedented control over the characters. Hide behind a wall, roll out, fire two shots, stand up, duck-and-run behind a box and catch another guy as he comes running around a corner to help his less-fortunate friend. In fact, once you dial it in, the control feels Zen-like (though it'll take a good half hour before you're really used to it).

The only problem, in fact, is that Koei seemed a little confused as to whether they were doing a 'kiddie' N64 game or a hard-core, 'piano wire across the throat' assassin sim. Some stilted dialogue and questionable AI—if I'm standing 5 feet from three armed-to-the-teeth mercenaries that just saw me crouch behind a box, you'd think they might investigate the situation, no? And the answer is 'no,' they don't—they simply wait for the angel of death (that's you) to spirit them away. Add in the fact that you can't jump or climb over objects that are only two feet high (maybe gravity is extra-firm in this world) and you've got some slightly odd gameplay... but that's OK, cause the rest of it's more fun than watching Arnold throw people like rag dolls in *Total Recall*. "You got what you want Cohagen, now give them da' air..."

So while Gabriel Logan and Solid Snake were kicking back on some tropical island sipping boat drinks, thinking they were 'all that...and a bag of chips,' the covert ops team snuck in and showed 'em a thing or two about real tactical espionage. It's almost a shame that Koei's next game looks to be the PS2's *Kessen*... I could've used another outing with the covert ops team of *Winback*. Dolphin, perhaps?

When ECM isn't engaged in vicious hand-to-hand combat with former members of the Soviet bloc countries, he finds time to practice his stammer.









R REVIEW	ECM: So where's Nobunaga?	Developer - Koei / Publisher - Koei	1-4 Players / Available Now	Viewpoint Score: 94

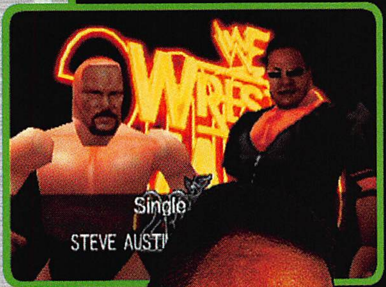
WWF Wrestlemania 2000









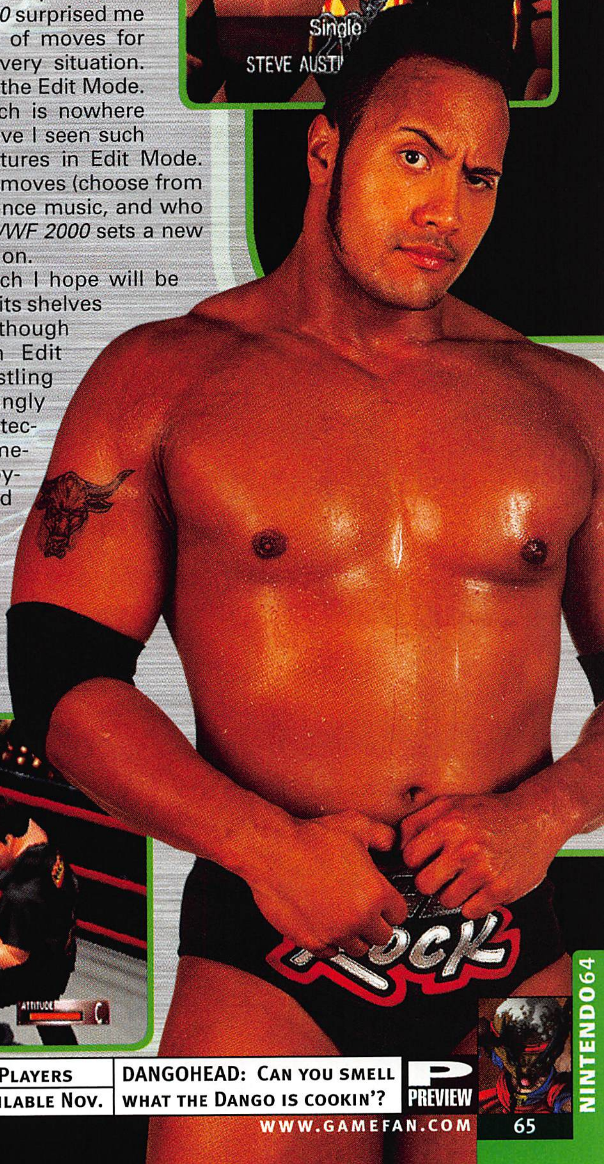


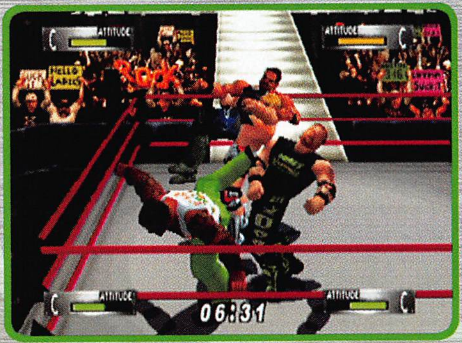
I have never understood the fascination with professional wrestling. As a young dango, I remember watching Jimmy "SuperFly" Snooka, Ricky "The Dragon" Steamboat, and a much younger, less-balding Hulk Hogan right after watching Saturday morning cartoons and remarking to myself how lame wrestling is. Now, many years later, professional wrestling is still going strong and has been labeled the "soap opera for guys." And I'm still wondering why the heck professional wrestling has lasted this long and why its games are doing so well when most of them, well, suck. So, unlikely as it may seem... <taking a deep breath> I dig *WWF Wrestlemania 2000* quite a bit. And for a non-wrasslin' fan to admit to that means THQ is cookin' up something real good.

WWF Wrestlemania 2000 features the entire current roster of wrestlers in the WWF, including "Stone Cold" Steve Austin, Undertaker, Big Show, and "The People's Champ" The Rock. The total of 44 WWF superstars (and six female WWF members) make up a huge list of characters to choose from, all of which look similar to their real-life counterparts. While the game isn't a graphical tour-de-force on the N64, the animations of each wrestler are dead on. Everything from Stone Cold's marching walk to X-Pac's Bronco Buster to The People's Elbow are identical to the actual move. While there are graphical problems which I hope THQ addresses (the crowds are pretty pixelly), the game itself looks pretty good.

Gameplay is where it's at. While there have been a ton of wrestling games, very few have actually played well. *WWF 2000* surprised me with an awesome assortment of moves for every area of the ring and every situation. What most impressed me was the Edit Mode. Not since *WWF Attitude* (which is nowhere near as good as this game) have I seen such an astounding amount of features in Edit Mode. You can customize everything: moves (choose from any in the game), taunts, entrance music, and who your enemies and allies are. *WWF 2000* sets a new high watermark for customization.

There are a few things which I hope will be addressed before *WWF 2000* hits shelves everywhere. First off, even though there are many choices in Edit Mode, some standard wrestling options (e.g. masks) are glaringly missing. Also, the collision detection in the game can be somewhat iffy, to the point of annoyance. Lastly, the game should have "smart" victory replays. For example, I would rather see the replay of a finishing move than the pin itself. But I'm not worried, because right now, *WWF 2000* is the wrestling game everyone should be playing. D







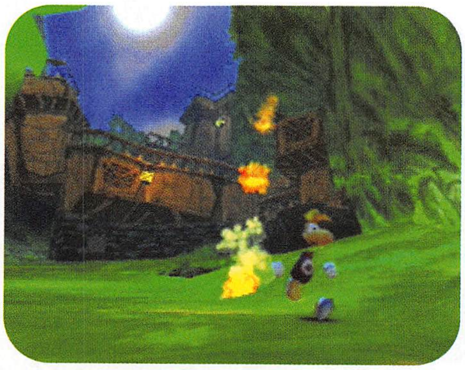
Developer - THQ	1-4 Players	Dangohead: Can you smell what the Dango is cookin'?
Publisher - THQ	Available Nov.	

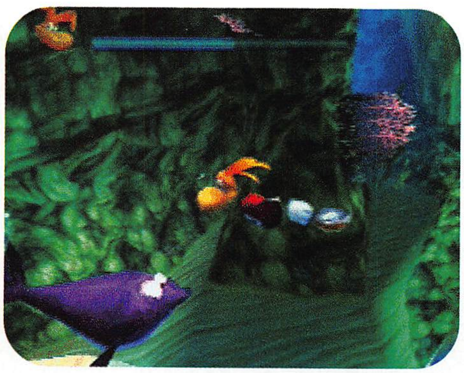
P PREVIEW

Know the Difference.



This is Rayman, star of the massive 3D action-adventure, Rayman® 2 The Great Escape. Beware of cheap imitations! Only Rayman can save all. Only he can battle the invaders, ride the rocket, hurl fireballs, fly, surf, ski, climb, slide, and more. A world this troubled needs Rayman. So, beware of imposters!









NINTENDO 64

CD-ROM WINDOWS 95

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Ubi Soft ENTERTAINMENT

Rayman Consumer Test #11



1.____

A.Rayman

B.a man called Ray



2.____

A.Rayman

B.a man called Ray

1.A; 2.B

COMING SOON

COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON



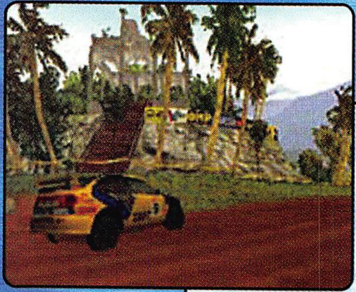


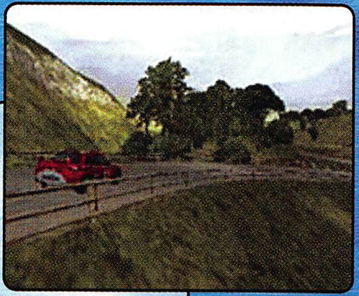
NASCAR 2000 (EA) — EA's racing titles haven't shown much excitement lately, but NASCAR 2000 is looking pretty damn hot. Finally, Jeff Gordon gets his.



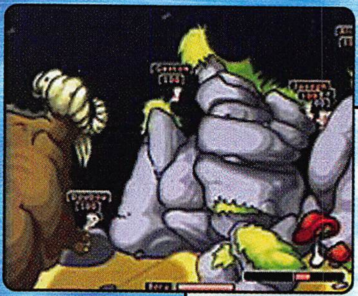
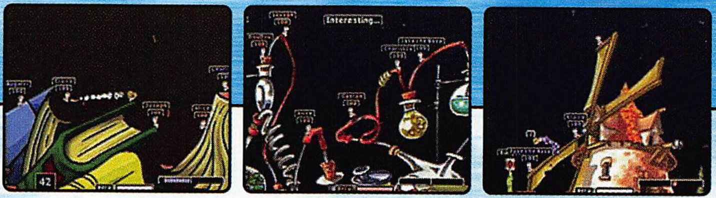


Armorines (Acclaim) — Yes, it's in Coming Soon again. But trust us... it'll be coming out, and players will be soon blasting the entrails of alien scum throughout the universe.





RallyMasters (Infogrames) — The world never gets tired of rally games, which is why *RallyMasters* is coming out with a supposed blazing multi-player feature. Check out next month for more.


Worms: Armageddon (Infogrames) — Don't try to use these worms as bait, or else you might get your finger blown off. The fun and humorous strategy game on the PC will entertain all N64 owners early next year.






Harvest Moon 64 (Natsume) — Don't let this farming simulation fool you; it's **not** boring. *Harvest Moon 64* is one of the most enjoyable games to come to the N64. Check out next issue for a full review.


The first blast wiped out your Space Center. In just 3 hours, the high-tech weapons satellite will strike again...It's your job to make sure that it doesn't.
Intense 3rd Person Action/Shooter
Precision laser-sighting aiming mechanism
Immense 3D Environments
Battle heavily-armed Boss Chracters and "smart" enemies
Rumble Pak Support
"Explosive N64 adventure" ...Nintendo Power
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WINBACK
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Only For
TEEN
T
AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY
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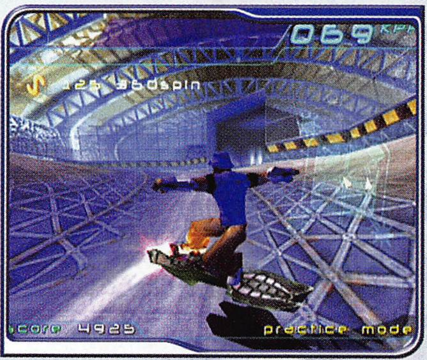
get ready...





When my friends and I first saw the trailer for *The Haunting of Hill House*, we decided it was a must-see movie. So, opening night at the Irvine Spectrum, we were first in line. At least the first 20-30 minutes were entertaining. However, come minute 31, it was like hearing a speech from Wally George—plausible, but painful [ed's note: Wally's an angry, loud-mouthed, right wing radical for those not up on their crazy conservatives]. Yeah, you can say *The Haunting* was a let down, even with Catherine Zeta-Jones. Now rewind five months to mid-May. A lovely female friend from Acclaim is giving me the rundown of the Acclaim fall lineup at E3. Among the bunch is a game titled *Velocity Trick Style*, a Dreamcast skateboarding game with *Back to the Future*-like hoverboards! Plus, there's a raver-like soundtrack which I was looking forward to. Flash back to the present; I've played *TrickStyle* to death... or should I say come to near-death playing it. Here was a game which I was wholeheartedly looking forward to, but Criterion dropped the ball... about ten stories somewhere between E3 and today.





TrickStyle

ECM's argument that PC games should stay on PC is right on. Unless we're talking *Quake III* or *Tiberian Sun*, we shouldn't be talkin' at all. Who wants to see another Expendable on Dreamcast? Not I...

Sadly, I can't bring myself to dislike *TrickStyle*, but at the same time, I'm not enjoying it as expected. I'll admit Criterion has potential to break away from the clichéd mold of other British developers. But what's that stereotype you hear all too often? Photo-realistic graphics... accompanied by no gameplay. *TrickStyle* isn't completely devoid of gameplay, but it's no *Tony Hawk*.

TrickStyle's primary problem is the execution of its tricks and the point-reward system. Don't believe me? On one challenge stage you're told to rack up 15,000 points to earn a new hoverboard. This











usually difficult task can be accomplished by pressing the "A" button to jump then "X" while airborne to perform a 360°. At 500 points apiece, 30 of these bad boys will earn you a new board. Another flaw is that the cool stuff doesn't appear until you've put in your time. Each skater has a bare bones repertoire of tricks to start with. Criterion saved most of the cooler levels for the latter portion of the game, but who knows if you'll ever see them.



Playing *TrickStyle* for as long as I did wasn't torture—it's too gorgeous to be anywhere near torture. You won't see anything better anywhere else. Taken at face value, this can be an enjoyable racing game, but that's where it ends. The courses are varied enough only to keep your interest. *TrickStyle* could have been the *Tony Hawk* for Dreamcast, but the tricks aren't up to par. Maybe the name should have been *Velocity*; there's a lot of that at least.





Oh, what to do? *TrickStyle* has as much to like as dislike. The crew is all typecast. Shin, the Japanese skater, must've missed his Power Ranger rehearsal because he's got the Red Ranger outfit going on. Baby Spice should get an endorsement with Angel—it's not a coincidence, that's for sure. Seven other characters round out the starting set.

welcome to the future...









Trick and standard animations on the skaters are deceivingly lifelike. To complement the rave environment is some similarly-themed music. My rating stands, but if *TrickStyle* has a second coming and everything is fixed it'd easily pull in a 95.

Cerberus has been collecting refrigerator magnets so that he can attach them to his snowboard for that hoverboard effect. However, still no luck...



Viewpoint Score	•70	Developer - Criterion	1-2 Players	Cerberus:
		Publisher - Acclaim	Available Now	Hover or Die!

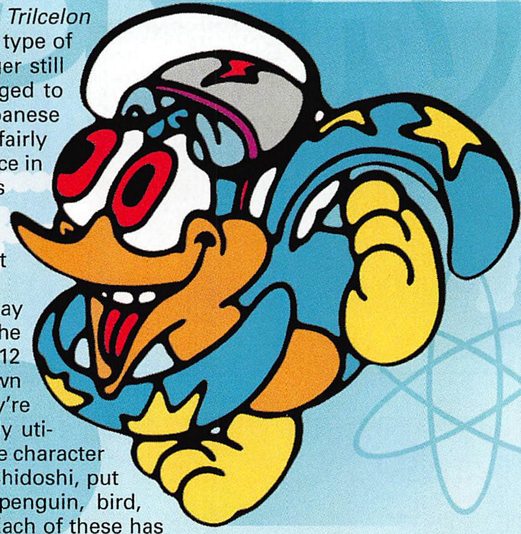
R REVIEW











In all honesty, I never expected *Pen Pen Trilcelon* to be released in the States. It's not the type of game that screams "next gen." Stranger still is the fact that this niche title has managed to make it as a launch title for both the Japanese and U.S. Dreamcasts. The concept is fairly simple—pick your favorite Pen Pen and race in a violence-free triathlon that includes swimming, belly surfing, and ice walking. O.K., so it's not exactly the most exciting launch title; in fact, it's probably the tamest of the DC's initial crop of games.

PPT might not turn heads in the gameplay department, but graphically, it's one of the better-looking DC games I've seen. The 12 racing circuits come complete with their own theme (horror, jungle, toys, etc.), and they're all extremely colorful (the developers fully utilized the DC's expansive color palette). The character design is straight out of a Sanrio store—Shidoshi, put down the Hello Kitty doll—including a penguin, bird, octopus, shark, walrus, dog, and hippo. Each of these has its own unique style; the penguin, for instance, is better suited than most in dealing with icy surfaces, while the shark... please tell me ya know where I'm goin' with this.

The multi-player aspect in *Pen Pen* is one of the game's stronger features. It's extremely difficult to make up time if you fall too far behind. So when you do catch up, you'll do everything in your power to stay in the lead, including taking measures that aren't so... well, cute. Nothing's quite as funny as watching a harmless Pen Pen cut off a competitor, forcing them into a wall or barreling towards an obstacle.

Leave talk of frame rate, Z-buffering, and mip-mapping for games like *Rally 2* and *Sonic Adventure*. *PPT* is straightforward wacky Dreamcast racing for your younger siblings. Keep the core audience in mind and be kind to your fellow Pen Pen, they're a vulnerable lot.

Fury plans to enter his parents' deaf and blind cat if Pen Pen *ever receives a sequel.*



PenPeN TRilceLON™

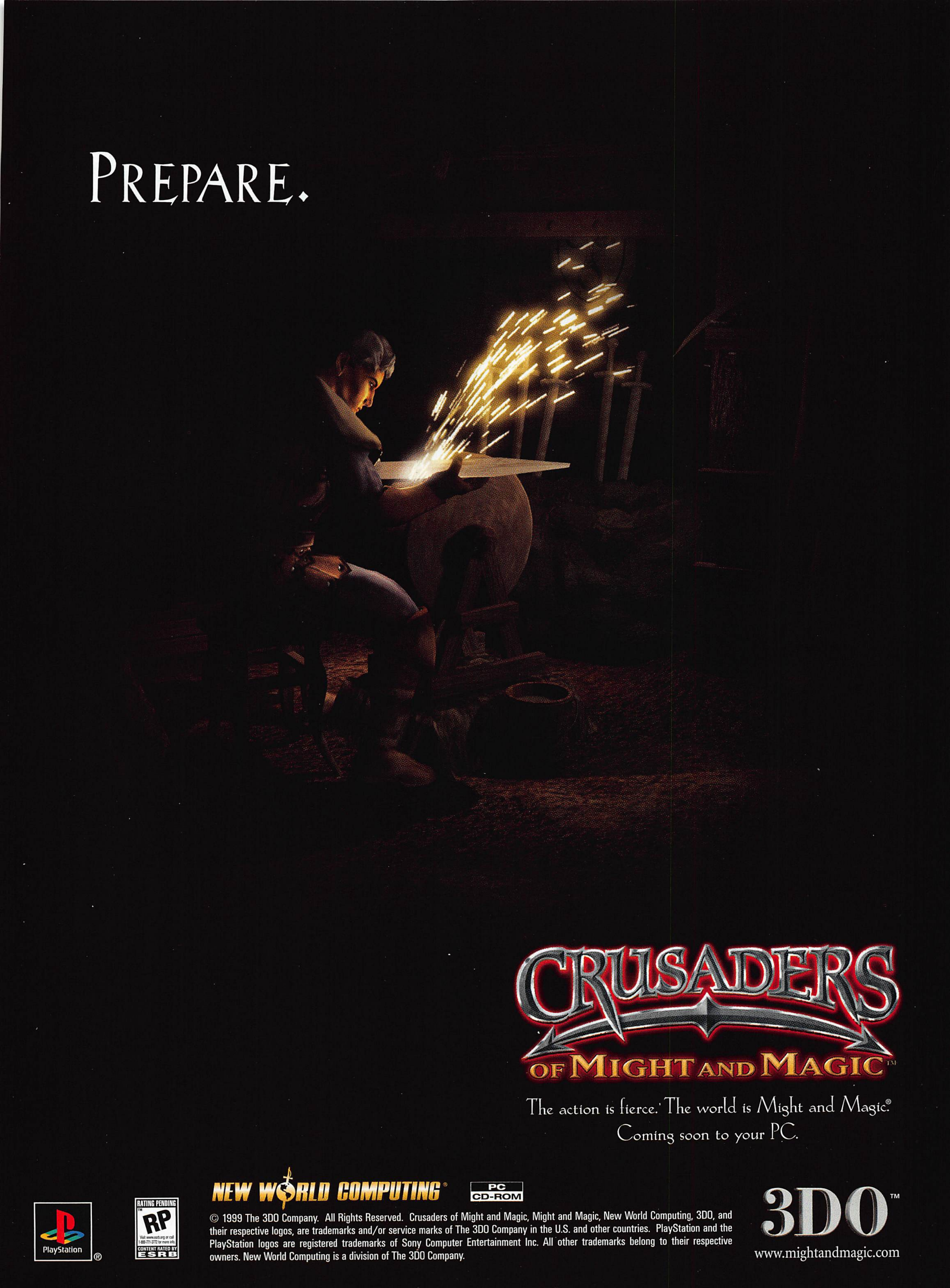


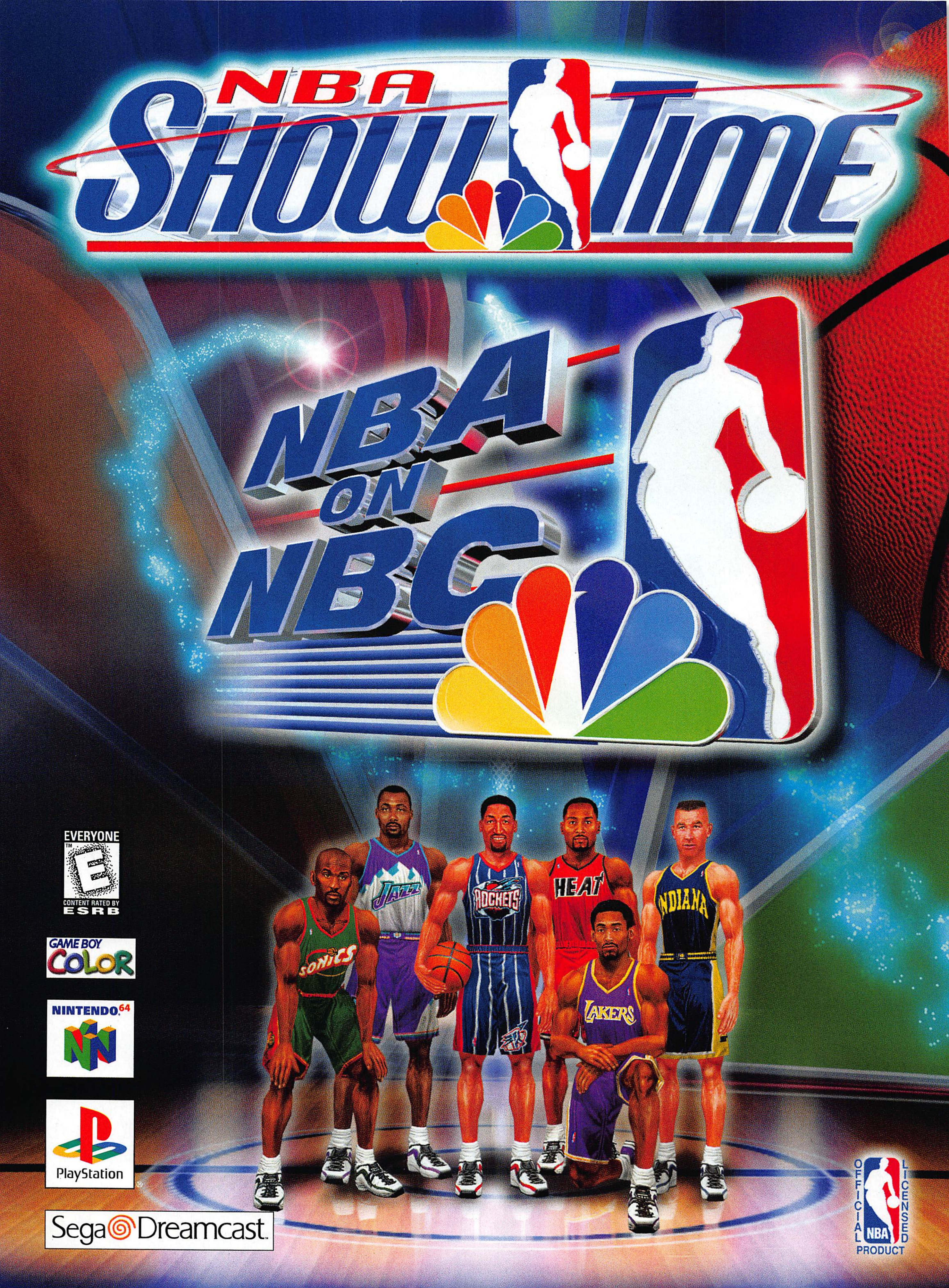






REVIEW	FURY: PENGUINS, SHARKS AND OCTOPI, OH MY!	DEVELOPER - GENERAL ENT. PUBLISHER - INFOGRAMES	1-4 PLAYERS AVAILABLE SEP. 9	VIEWPOINT SCORE :80


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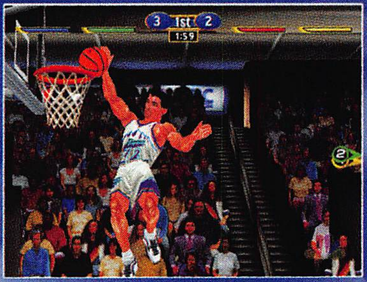

NBA
SHOWTIME
NBA ON NBC
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
GAME BOY COLOR
NINTENDO 64
PlayStation
Sega Dreamcast
OFFICIAL LICENSED NBA PRODUCT
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The NBA Like You've Never Seen it Before!

NBA Showtime brings you the top players from each team in a heart pounding, pulse-racing, above-the-rim match up. You'll see it on their faces and hear it in their voices, you'll feel the intensity of every pass and every shot. This is what the NBA is all about!

This year we've added Create-A-Player Mode giving you access to a wider range of NBA personalities. Now you can choose alternate NBA players, models, and mascots, then adjust their individual skills and abilities to meet your needs.

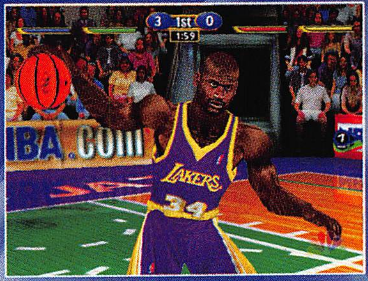
You'll play in every arena around the league with all the drama and fanfare you've come to expect from the NBA. It's the NBA at its best, right here on NBC.



Above-The-Rim 3-D Action



High Flyn' Dunks



Superstar Secret Moves



Create a Prime Time Player

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SPEED DEVILS

Racing games have plenty of competition on the Dreamcast. Games such as *Sega Rally 2* and *Tokyo Extreme Racer* (two of the most incredible console racers in recent memory) have set the standard for DC racers. Talk of inconsistent frame rate and blurry, pixelated visuals are a thing of the past. And unlike the Saturn, which hosted only a handful of quality racers (*Manx TT, Daytona Remix, Sega Touring Car* and *Sega Rally*), the DC appears ready to take the checkered flag in the racing genre.

Speed Devils is the newest racer headed to the DC, and this coming from French developers Ubi Soft, no less. I must admit that I still have difficulty associating Ubi Soft with anything other than *Rayman*. Even *Tonic Trouble* reminded me over and over again of the jointless wonder. *Speed Devils*, on the other hand, is a fresh and welcome addition to Ubi's upcoming next-gen lineup.

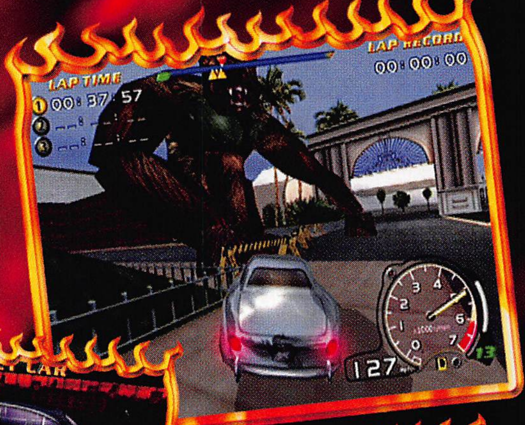
Although *Speed Devils* is a port of the PC racer *Speed Busters*, it fortunately shies away from the typical PC simulation elements. Accurate vehicle physics and realistic weather conditions have nothing in common with *SD*. Rather, the game relies more on Midway's *Cruis'n*-style gameplay—more throttle and fewer severe turns. Players need not concern themselves with dialing in the proper technique. Instead, point your wheel straight and attempt to avoid obstacles.

When players first enter into the championship race (arcade mode being the only other selectable feature), they are presented with one seriously busted vehicle. It looks like some old hooptie that reminds me of the main ride in *Crazy Taxi*. Without a buck to your name and only a junker in the garage, your only option is to win enough prize money to purchase upgrades or even a new car. That might sound feasible at first, but with the going rate on modifications starting at over $10,000, you might be stuck with the equivalent of your grandparents' car for some time.

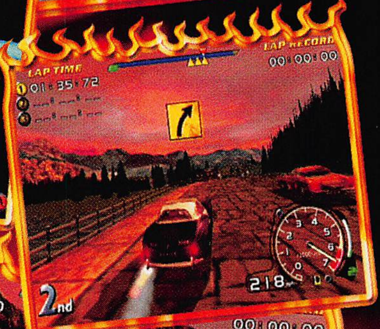
The visuals in *SD* are one of the game's stronger features. Whereas *Tokyo Extreme Racer* has an insane frame rate and *Rally 2* has unbelievable control, *SD* has a huge polygonal ape and hostile natives... not a bad trade off in my opinion.

All joking aside, the in-game graphics are very impressive, showcasing large detailed cars and unique objects that players can interact with. On one level in particular, a squadron of low flying acrobat jets (in the vein of the Blue Angels) fill the screen and obstruct your view with multi-colored jet wash.

Between *Speed Devils, Monaco GP*, and the upcoming *Rayman 2*, it seems Ubi Soft has found a cushy new home on Sega's super console. Lets just pray that we never see a 128-bit *Tonic Trouble* (sorry, Eggo). **F**

















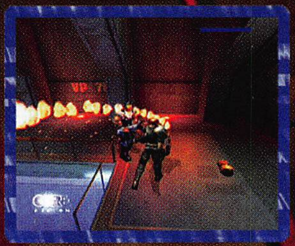


FURY: PC PORTS ARE THE DEVIL'S WORK...	DEVELOPER - UBI SOFT	1-2 PLAYERS
	PUBLISHER - UBI SOFT	AVAILABLE NEVER

PREVIEW







Beat-'em-ups are one of my favorite genres. From *Final Fight* to *Streets of Rage* I've always loved the action and elegant simplicity of delivering a bone-crushing blow to the head, gut, or groin area. Walk around, find bad guy and dispose, repeat—so simple, it hurts... a lot. And in the case of the original *Fighting Force*, I mean that quite literally.

I was once under the impression that if a game sold poorly, a sequel was not an option. That's why you can say I was a wee bit shocked when Eidos announced a sequel to *Fighting Force* was in the works, and on the Dreamcast no less.

But the surprises don't end there, oh no... *Fighting Force 2* isn't even a beat-'em-up any more! Ok, now I'm really confused. A sequel to a bad game gets the green light for production, and the developers decide to change the genre. Nothing better than throwing your Core audience a few surprises to keep life interesting. You can just imagine the conversation between the Eidos big-wigs and the *FF2* team:

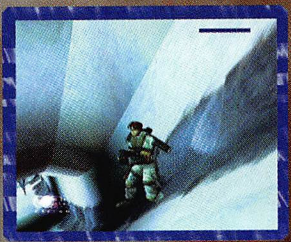
Eidos: We want you guys to do a *Fighting Force* sequel.
FF2 Team: Great! Are you sure we're talking about the same game?
Eidos: Of course! By the way, have you seen the sales figures on *Syphon Filter*?
FF2 Team: Uh, no.
Eidos: Ah, good, good.... Well, we were thinking about making a few changes to the overall look and feel of the game.
FF2 Team: Well, O.K., as long as it's still a 3D beat-'em-up at heart.
Eidos – Of course! But we just want to do a tweak here and a pinch there... you won't notice a thing <snicker>.

Needless to say, other than borrowing a bit from the *Fighting Force* story, *FF2* is a completely original title. And, from the early demo I've played, it appears Eidos might have found the winning combination of great graphics and stealthy gameplay. The game's environments look extremely sharp, although our playable showcased only three levels—snow, jungle, and inside a base.

The enemy AI has yet to be implemented, but I had the option to blast harmless bad guys with my shotgun. It appears the final version will have a huge arsenal of weapons, including grenade launchers, flame-throwers, bazookas, sniper rifles, and plenty other utensils of destruction to keep players engulfed in the action.

FF2 really has very little to do with its predecessor, and believe me, that's a good thing. I almost wonder why Eidos decided to stick with the *FF* name, instead of embarking on a brand new series... it certainly looks like one. F

FIGHTING FORCE II




DEVELOPER - CORE	1 PLAYER	FURY: THE ONLY WAY TO SELL
PUBLISHER - EIDOS	AVAILABLE 4TH QTR.	A FIGHTING FORCE SEQUEL!

P PREVIEW

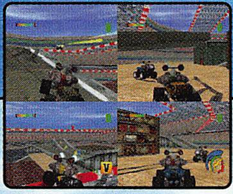
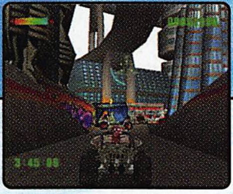
Dreamcast

COMING SOON

Dreamcast

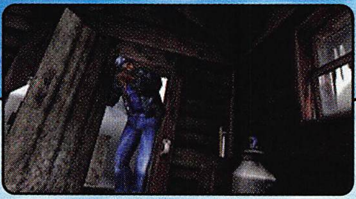
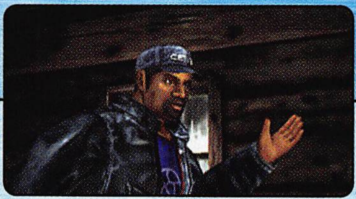
Dreamcast



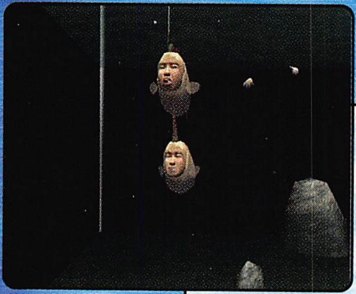
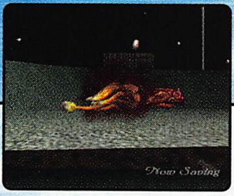





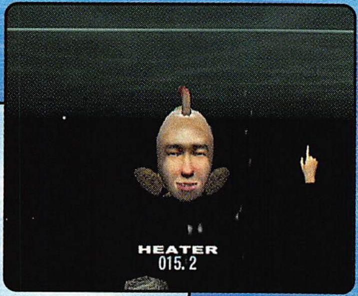
Red Dog (Argonaut) — From the makers of *StarFox* comes a ground-based shooting game with great multi-player capabilities. And no, it's not on rails.


D2 (Warp) — The much-anticipated title from Kenji Eno, *D2* brings a sweet mix of action and horror. And no, it's not like *Resident Evil*.

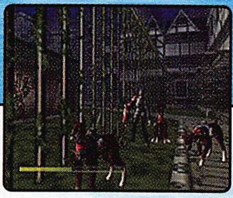
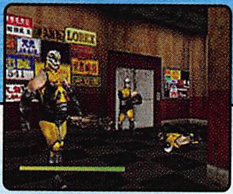
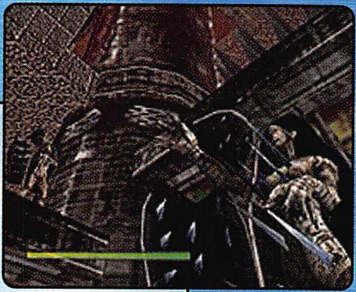







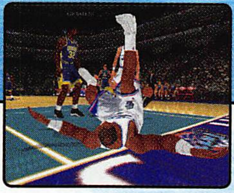
Seaman (Sega) — Okay, let's get this straight. You take care of your pets, which are fishes with human heads. And you can communicate with them and teach them new words. Riiiiight...

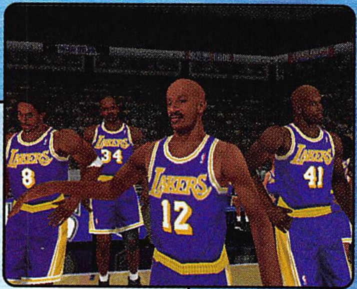


Maken X (Atlus) — Great looking backgrounds and a grim setting filled with twisted characters and swastika symbols everywhere... hmm, I sense much violence in this title.







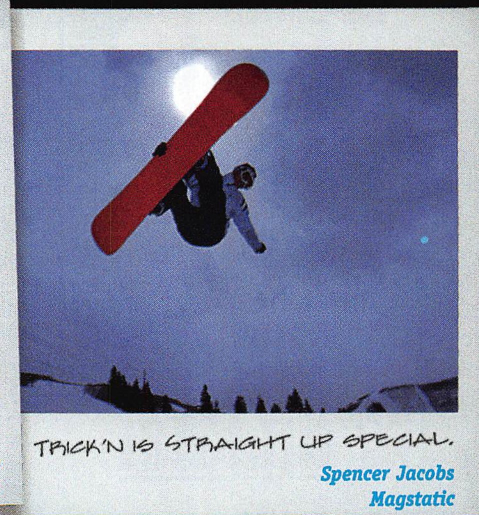
NBA2K (Visual Concepts) — Following up with the best football game to this date is possibly the best basketball game. *NBA2K* looks to blow the doors off the competition.

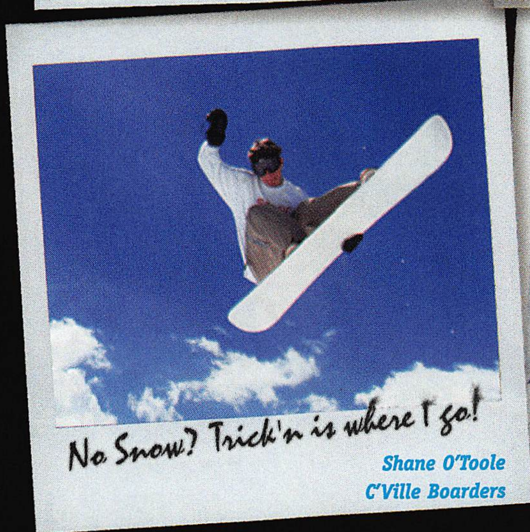
SAY "STALEFISH"

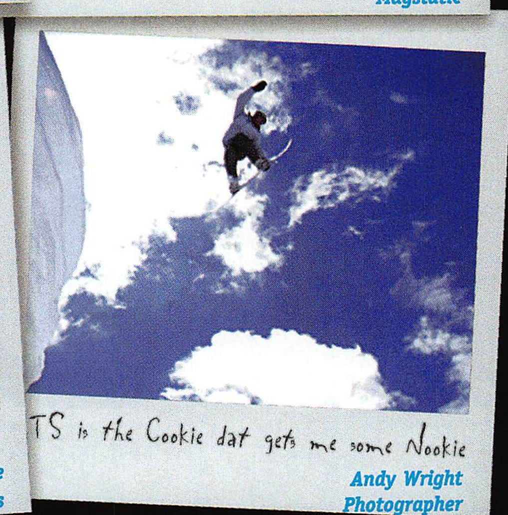
Trick'n Snowboarder™ is a shred-fest of sheer speed, tweakin' tricks, and slopes packed with media maniacs trying to make you a star! Race across the world on 10 international courses in 4 different modes of play, all the while stylin' airs in front of the cameras to score points and create a snowboard vid starring you.

*Don't miss the cameo by Capcom RE2 characters!

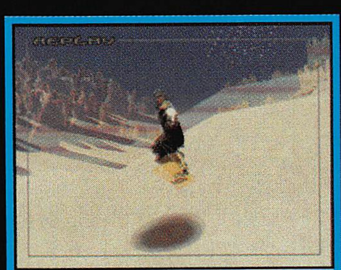


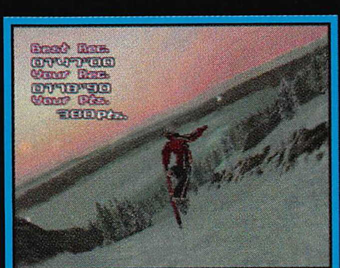














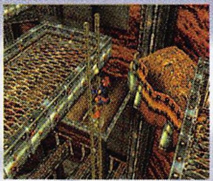
EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

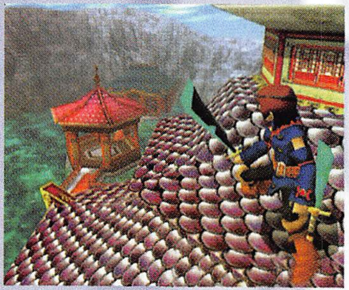
PlayStation

CAPCOM

www.capcom.com





Eternal Arcadia

If you saw our RPG special (August 1999), you know how much *GameFan* loves the *Phantasy Star* series. And if you didn't, what kind of loyal reader are you?!? It's been a long time since we immersed ourselves in the world of Dark Force. Not since the Genesis have we seen Alis' crew kick some alien booty. *Phantasy Star* for the Master System was light years ahead of its time. While "NESers" were slashing Octoroks with the White Sword, the less numerous Master Systems owners kept Alis company through her battle with King Lassic. Years later the Genesis had three sequels, well, let's call it two because *Phantasy Star III* wasn't that fantastic.

Well, *Phantasy Star* and Dreamcast fans are in for a treat. *Eternal Arcadia* is a brand new RPG from the makers of our beloved *Phantasy Star*. The question remains whether this one is linked to its *Phantasy* roots, but nonetheless it should be a great game.

Done in true Dreamcast fashion, *Eternal Arcadia* takes place in a fully 3D, fantasy world. Like in the *Panzer Dragoon Saga* universe, the Sky Pirates of *EA* sail airships about freely. Two clans control the wild blue yonder: the chivalrous Blue and the treacherous Black. Vyse, a young budding hero, is a member of the Blue Pirates. With childhood buddy Aika at his side, the duo sets out for an as-yet unspecified quest.

Expect only the best from the *Phantasy Star* team. They've been out of it for quite a while, but with the help of Sega, *Eternal Arcadia* can only be the definitive RPG for the Dreamcast. Keep your fingers crossed and your eyes on these pages for more information, as well as even more screen shots. **Cerberus**

DOA2 Update!

Japan

Dead or Alive 2 is one of those games that proves the Dreamcast can handle its polygons. It's a shame we can't play it yet, and it'll be another six to eight months (if that) before us gaijins even see *DOA2*. But what the hell, next month we'll have some head shots to get your mouth watering. Skeptics beware, they won't be movie cinematics, this is the NAOMI board doing what it does best. Looks like *Shen Mue's* got some competition in the visual department. We're as anxious as you are to play the game. Pray to the fighting game gods (no, not Capcom) that Tecmo has the foresight to release this beauty for the U.S. Dreamcast. **Cerberus**



Capcom's not sitting still while its *Spawn* license goes stale. We all knew that a Spawn game was in development, but not like this. I know Dango and the rest of you might have been expecting a *Spawn Versus Street Fighter* crossover, but not a *Quake*-like arcade corridor shooter. Atari's already gotten everyone's attention with the moderately entertaining *War*. Though not as control-friendly as we'd like, *War* at least opened up an untapped venue for arcade games. In the same sense, *Spawn* can take this new arcade genre to greater heights with McFarlane-designed characters and gameplay that only Capcom can deliver.

Powered by the Dreamcast-based NAOMI board, *Spawn* is a visual tour de force with real-time character transformations and wicked looking weapons. The demo we saw running ran exceptionally fast. With link capabilities, what more could you ask for? Good news is that we'll see this in U.S. arcades relatively soon, and even better, a Dreamcast conversion is almost certain. **Cerberus**

Spawn & Outrigger on NAOMI!



Capcom's not the only company interested in delving into the first person shooter corridor genre. Sega's hard at work on the NAOMI-driven *Outrigger*. Details are still a bit sketchy at press time, but from what we've seen this looks almost as good as Spawn. The control panel consists of a flight-style joystick which is located to the left of the panel for character movement. A trackball to the right of that mimics the function of a mouse. Firing is done via a shoot button on the stick and a jump button is placed right between the stick and trackball. *Outrigger* supports 1-4 player network-like gameplay. **Cerberus**

Dango's VOOT Watch

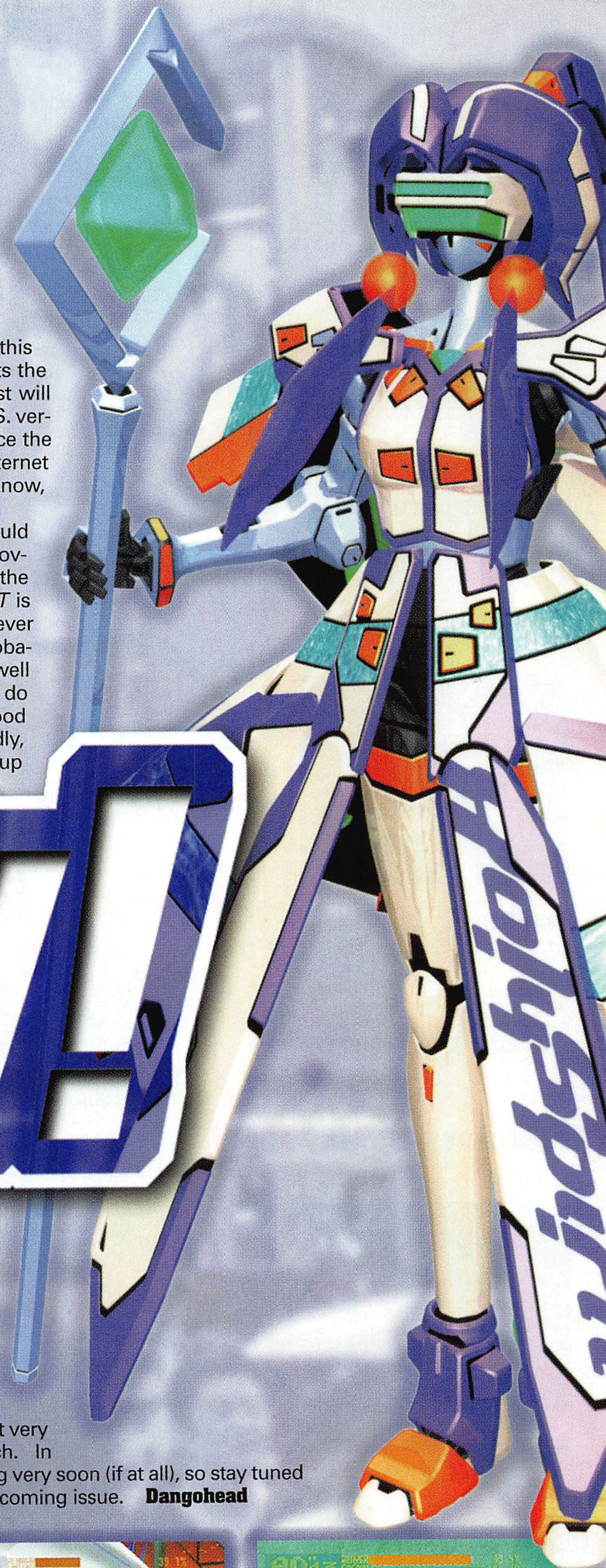




For every good piece of news you hear there's always some bad. If you've been keeping up with the *VOOT* Watch, then you've been hearing all the good news about *VOOT* for Dreamcast. For lesser mortals, *VOOT* stands for *Virtual On Oratorio Tangram*, and I've been singing the praises of this arcade game for a while, as it truly represents the next level of gameplay. *VOOT* for Dreamcast will be out this year in Japan, but what about a U.S. version? Will hard-core gamers get to experience the glory of this Model 3 Step 2 game at home, Internet play and all? The answer is a big, "We don't know, but it's not looking good."

First off, SoJ is very protective (as they should be) when it comes to releasing any of their coveted first party products, especially *VOOT* for the U.S. Dreamcast. In Japanese arcades, *VOOT* is one of the most popular games, and since it never came to the U.S. in wide distribution, SoJ probably thinks *VOOT* for Dreamcast won't do well (considering *Virtual On: Cybertroopers* didn't do well in arcades). This is certainly not good news for *VOOT* fans in the U.S. Secondly, there's a chance a third party will pick up

Now!



the game, but it's unlikely. Licensing fees for a game of *VOOT*-caliber would be quite costly since it's a very high-end game.

So, what are the chances of *VOOT* coming to the U.S. then? I can see it happening, but the chances are not good. Still, THQ has expressed interest in bringing it Stateside, and it should be able to handle the monstrous licensing fees. And since the game isn't very text-intensive, translating it should be a cinch. In any case, the import version should be coming very soon (if at all), so stay tuned for a full-blown preview of *VOOT* DC in an upcoming issue. **Dangohead**











Imports



There are certain things you can count on everyday. EA will sell millions, Tommy Tallarico will get the babes, and Treasure will make good games. What? Never heard of Treasure? Perhaps you've heard of their games... While at Konami, they worked on *Axelay*, *Contra: Alien Wars*, and *Super Castlevania IV* on SNES. Then, tired of doing sequels, the team left Konami to form Treasure—a company with the pure-minded vision to create only original titles. What it ended up doing was redefining genres with every release: *Gunstar Heroes*, *McDonalds Treasure Land*, *Light Crusader*, and *Dynamite Headdy* on Genesis; *Alien Soldier* on Mega Drive; *Guardian Heroes*, *Silhouette Mirage*, and *Radiant Silvergun* (import only... much to ECM's chagrin) on Saturn, and *Mischief Makers* on N64. Quite the track record for good games, isn't it? Well PlayStation owners are getting their second Treasure game in *Rakugaki Showtime* (*Silhouette Mirage* came out in Japan for PS, and we'll see it later this year). It's *Parappa the Rapper* meets *Poy Poy*, and it's flat-out strange.

ラクガキショータイム

RAKUGAKI SHOWTIME™



This is one of those games with a literally hand-drawn theme a la *Comix Zone* on the Genesis. Characters are pencilled in at the beginning and erased when they're eliminated. The art-style is much like Sony's *Parappa the Rapper*—flat, cutout characters. But the environments are 3D, with full free-roaming movement, while the gameplay is like *Power Stone* or *Poy Poy*. As you can see, it's hard describing *Rakugaki Showtime*, because you don't see games this strange all the time. It defies classification and breaks all the rules of how to make a game.

The object is to eliminate enemies by constantly smacking them around with weapons, special moves, super attacks, or each other. Scattered about the arena, there are items which you can pick up and lob. And if no weapon is handy, then just lift up the nearest enemy and toss him around instead! Fans of *Poy Poy* will be able to pick up the controller and jump right into the chaos in this wacky four-player party game.



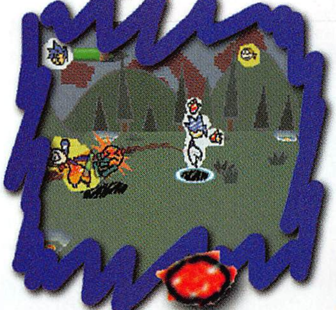






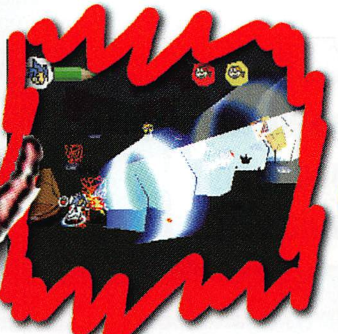
Of course there's more to it than that... the power-ups range from rockets to bombs to happy faces. Happy faces? Yes, that's right. Keep smacking enemies with the happy face and it becomes angry. When it's completely pissed off, you'll hear a "Hallelujah!" and picking it up will unleash a super attack, filling the screen with insane lighting effects and over-the-top explosions that'll leave your PlayStation smokin'.

While playing, I thought to myself, "If this game didn't have Treasure's name attached to it, I probably wouldn't have given it as much play time as I did. It's so bizarre when you first see it, that you won't know what to think. It's easy to play it for a minute, put down the controller, scratch your head, and move on. But if you sit down and spend some time with it, *Raku Gaki Showtime* can be as much fun as *Poy Poy* or *Power Stone*, or















any of those run-around fighting-action games.

There's no word yet on whether an American publisher will be bringing this game to the U.S., but Sony's done a great job of not stranding good imports overseas. And if it's willing to push *Parappa the Rapper* and *UmJammer Lammy* to the extent that we've seen, then who's to say if somebody will pick up *RS*? If you can't wait to see Treasure's take on the *Poy Poy* scene, then you'd best visit your local importer. Just be warned, it's very different and it's a bit obscure. So don't be surprised to have conversations like:

Hard-core Gamer: Do you guys have *Rakugaki Showtime*?
Import Clerk: What's it?
Hard-core Gamer: *Ra-ku-ga-ki Showtime*?
Import Clerk: What is that in English?
Hard-core Gamer: Umm.. you know, that game from Treasure?
Import Clerk: Who's that?
Hard-core gamer: Okbye. <click>

Eggo wishes he could go back with the magic hand and erase all those FFVIII *viewpoint scores.*







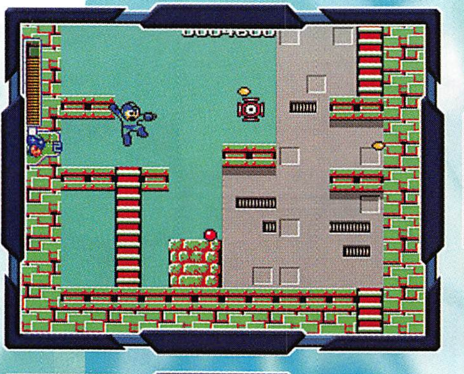


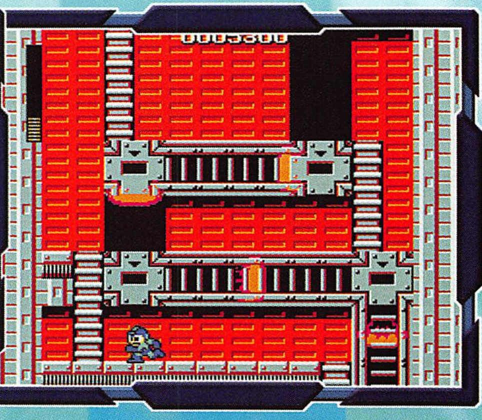


VIEWPOINT SCORE :87	DEVELOPER - TREASURE	1-4 PLAYERS	EGGO: IT'S SHOWTIME!
	PUBLISHER - ENIX	AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	

REVIEW

ROCKMAN

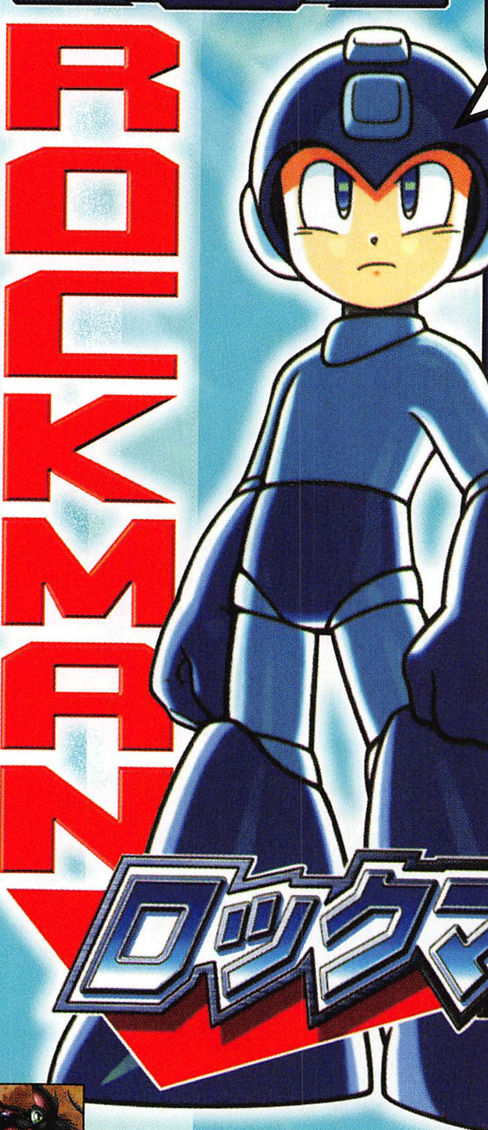


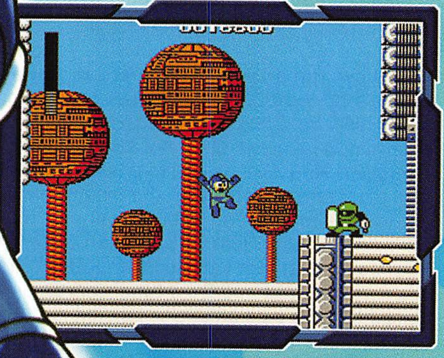
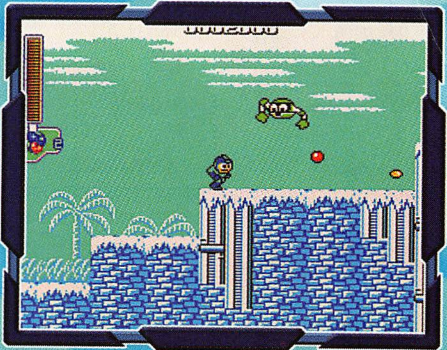



I must have possessed The Force in my younger years, plowing through games like there was no tomorrow. This game, *Rockman*, required ninja skills, yet somehow I beat it. In fact, I played and beat practically every *MegaMan* game.

Not until playing Capcom's re-released classic did I remember how difficult and frustrating it was. I still love the game—it's hard not to when you take into account that it was one of the best games for the NES. Don't get your hopes up too high, because *Rockman* is nothing more than a direct conversion, flicker and all, of the age-old game.

Capcom has included some new options, but nothing to get too excited about; well, maybe a little. There's a tutorial style mode that'll show you what to do or where to go next, but it's not like there's more than one way to go. The character database is a nice touch as well. But without a doubt the most notable feature is Pocket Station support. Plug in your import PokéSte (short for Pocket Station), download the 13-block mini-game and you're set. PokéRock (as it's called) is very similar to PokéZero. The interface is the same, and the games aren't that new. I wouldn't be surprised if both games were compatible.




I was skeptical if the game would play the same so I played through it on my PlayStation, and then I pulled out the old NES and Genesis copies to compare. *Rockman* is a flawless conversion on Capcom's part. Sad to say, control in MegaMan's first adventure wasn't what it should have been. The blue bomber tends to slide around too much, suffering from something ECM and I call Eurocom-syndrome. If you plan to get anywhere near Dr. Wily you're going to have to figure out when Mega will and won't jump.

One old game on a big PlayStation disc would appear to be a gyp, but it's not really. The entire MegaMan series (from *MegaMan* to *MegaMan 6*) is becoming available for practically nothing; they're priced low enough for even Fury to afford (and the poor guy has Prelude payments to keep up with). Your local import shop shouldn't charge you more than $25 for this oldie but goodie. At that price, no one can complain.

R REVIEW	CERBERUS: THE SUPER FIGHTING ROBOT!	DEVELOPER - CAPCOM	1 PLAYER	VIEWPOINT SCORE :80
		PUBLISHER - CAPCOM	AVAILABLE NOW	

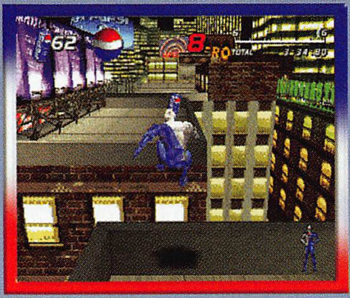
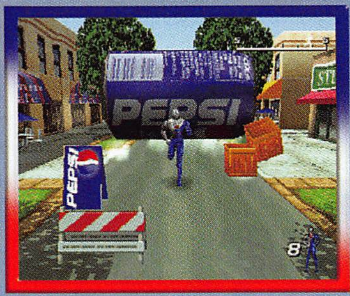
Cerberus is the only GF employee EVER to be seen in public with blue hair.






PEPSI MAN



If I hadn't played or seen it, I wouldn't believe it. A game based on a product mascot—a soda commercial superhero, no less—can't be a reality. Secondly, if it is a reality, it must suck—it just has to. It's a marketing manager's dream come true, and a party foul for sensible gamers. PepsiMan, a product of George Lucas' ILM and Pepsi's poster boy in Japan, is now starring in his first adventure on the PlayStation. Amazingly enough, our knight in shining aluminum fares well in his first game. For those who didn't know, PepsiMan is a walking Pepsi can of a superhero. When not battling against the evil Red Pizza Corporation, PepsiMan must quench the thirst of soda drinkers everywhere. The funny part is, he isn't all that coordinated; in fact, he's a blundering fool. He means well, but he tends to take some damage in those Japanese commercials. *PepsiMan*, the game, continues that silly theme.

Using forced vertical scrolling, PepsiMan bolts through a polygonal modern suburbia while collecting Pepsi cans and avoiding bystanders and hazardous objects. In the first stage, you bob and weave through what looks like the perfect neighborhood... except this perfect neighborhood has a load of active inhabitants, and to top it off, it's trash day. Other stages range from industrial factories to subways to desert roads. As an up-and-coming superhero, PepsiMan doesn't have super powers or a real attack. He spends all his time jumping, sliding, and running away from anything and everything.

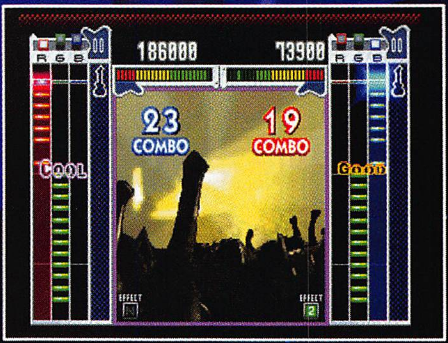
You're either going to love *PepsiMan* or hate it. If you're the latter, you must be a commie. Okay, I concede the game can get repetitive, but it's not that bad. There's too much going on with all the cool stuff to see to even notice the repetition. KID has mixed up the play elements and that helps a lot. A bunch of secret options is accessible if you beat the game. Yet another game that's value-priced, *PepsiMan* retails in Japan for the equivalent of $20 U.S. If anything, *PepsiMan* proves to be a really cool and trendy novelty item. SSCHHHHAAA!!!!

Cerberus can't drink Pepsi (cuz the bubbles tickle his nose) and thus sticks to water and ginseng drinks.

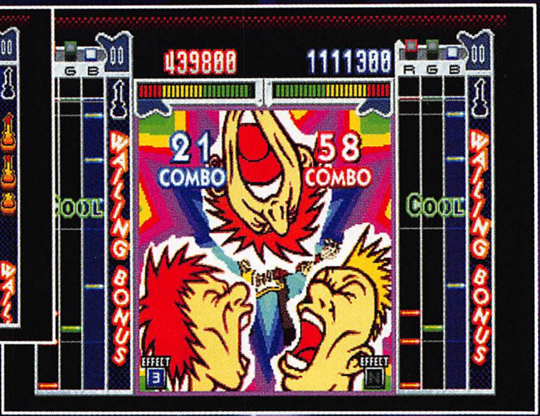


Hurry, PepsiMan, there's a world of thirsty people out there!

Viewpoint Score: 90	Developer - KID	1 Player	Cerberus: The choice	R Review
	Publisher - Jasrac	Available Now Japan	of Generation Next.	

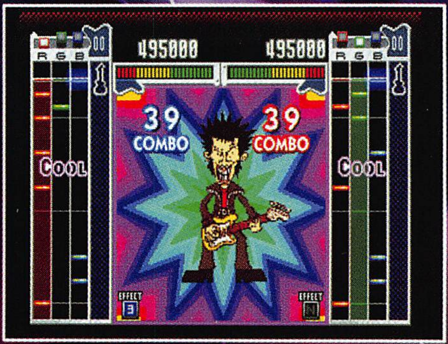


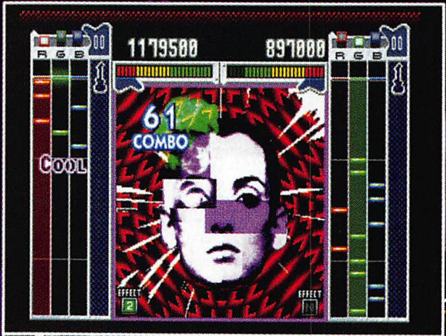




My brother took trumpet lessons for five years; my sister studied the violin for four years. And I, being the youngest (read: spoiled), studied how to get out of music lessons for six years. My parents tried my hand at piano… three lessons from three teachers. Sure I was interested in piano and guitar, but I didn't want to take lessons. Instead, I picked up both the guitar and piano in my spare time, learning how to play by ear.

When I first saw *Beatmania* in Florida two years ago I was hooked instantly. It was like playing the piano, and it had some jammin' tunes to boot. Konami continued to churn out the original arcade titles after that: *Dance Dance Revolution*, *Silent Scope*, and most recently, *Guitar Freaks* and *Drummania*. While *Guitar Freaks* isn't available in many U.S. arcades, you can pick up the import version—complete with guitar controller and all.





The object is pretty simple: keep the beat at all times. Red, green, and blue notes ascend the screen at a given pace (depending on the speed of the tune). The guitar controller has corresponding red, green, and blue buttons representing the chords. You must hold down the button that matches the on-screen color and strum while holding the button just as the note hits the beat. Sounds complicated? It's not, really; give yourself a couple of songs and soon you'll be rockin' like Yngwie. The songs range from the super easy (*Cutie Pie*) to the near impossible (*Lucky Staff*). As you play, interactive graphics (queued by your game) fill the center portion of the screen.

The eclectic music selection will keep even the harshest cynic happy. Whether you like electronica, rock, speed metal, jazz, or even alternative, Konami's made sure it's in there. *Happy Man* sounds decidedly like Green Day, while *Magic Music Magic* sounds like old KISS. Admittedly, my taste in games is odd, but *Guitar Freaks* ranks as one of my current favorite games and will likely stay there for a while.

Cerberus doesn't like rock concerts because the loud music gives him a headache.

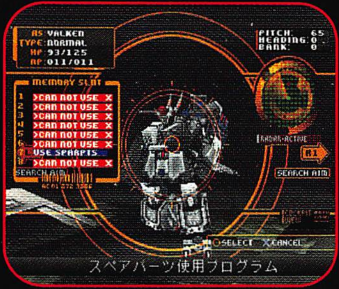


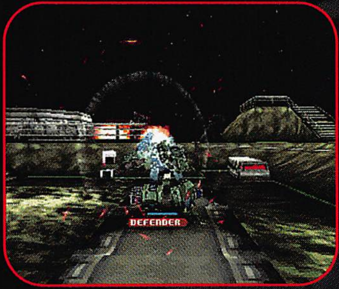


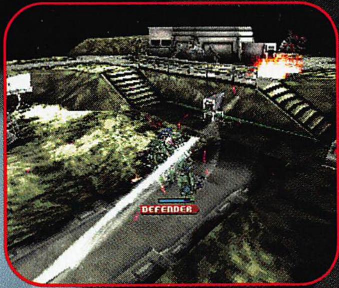
GUITAR FREAKS



REVIEW	CERBERUS: YOU WANTED THE BEST, YOU GOT THE BEST.	DEVELOPER - KONAMI PUBLISHER - KONAMI	1-2 PLAYERS AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 90











Back in the glory days of the SNES and Genesis there was a little series of games that went virtually unnoticed in the States. They went by the names of *Target Earth* for Genesis by Dreamworks (no, not *that* Dreamworks) and *Cybernator* on SNES by Konami. Both were side-scrolling mech action/adventures that were loosely related. See, in Japan, they were known as *Assault Suit Leynos* (TE) and *Assault Suit Valken* (Cyb.) and occupied parallel universes under the same company's label: NCS/Masaya. They were also distinguished as being some of the best games either console had ever seen (*Target Earth* was probably the most difficult Genesis game ever—yes, even harder than *The Adventures of Batman & Robin*). Sadly, as is typical of many a blazing import, neither received anything more than little-to-no recognition on our shores (though *Cybernator* did squeak out enough units to warrant a pseudo-sequel—Lucasarts' *Metal Marines*).

While neither got the sequels they desperately deserved on 16-bit, the Saturn did eventually get a sequel to *Leynos*. However, it lacked the heart (and tears-inducing difficulty) of its predecessor by virtue of the fact that it had nowhere near the number of levels (though it did feature some amazing scaling). So just when I'd given up hope of seeing a sequel that might do its brethren justice, *Assault Suit Valken 2* appears on the horizon! Could it be? A game that could make up for the mistakes that *Leynos 2* made, while going on to sell enough copies to easily justify a Dreamcast rev of either series?! I held my breath in complete and rapt anticipation… <sigh>, but I guess busting all of those blood vessels in my lungs was for naught, as *Assault Suit Valken 2* is a (meager drum roll, please)… strategy game.

Now don't get me wrong, I love a good strategy game as much as the next calculator-wielding social pariah (I've re-unified China on five separate occasions thanks to Koei), however the *Leynos/Valken* series has, and always will be about action, action, action!!! No thinking required, and certainly not welcome. I guess that Masaya figured they could bag a piece of the pie that Square firmly has a hold of with the horribly flawed 32-bit *Front Mission* games (can't turn off real-time sequences… please… kill… me).

Yep, this once-great (well, twice I guess) series has now been reduced to a sub-par, turn-based strategy game. And maybe that's the most insulting part: If it had been a relatively solid real-time strat-game (like Saturn *Quo Vadis 2*) then hey, sign me up! However, it isn't; not even close.

So now I'll continue to plod through the ultra-slow, über-painful maps and continue to question how something that should be as relatively painless as a *Leynos/Valken* game has degenerated into this mess of a title. Now I can only hold my breath (with what alveoli I have left… bust out those encyclopedias kiddies) and pray to the console gaming gods that Masaya doesn't somehow also tank *Langrisser Millenium* too (although considering the state of the post-16-bit *Langrissers*, I'm not well, you know…). **ECM**



ASSAULT SUITS VALKEN 2

Viewpoint Score: 70	Developer - Masaya	1 Player	ECM: And now for something completely different...
	Publisher - Masaya	Available Now Japan	

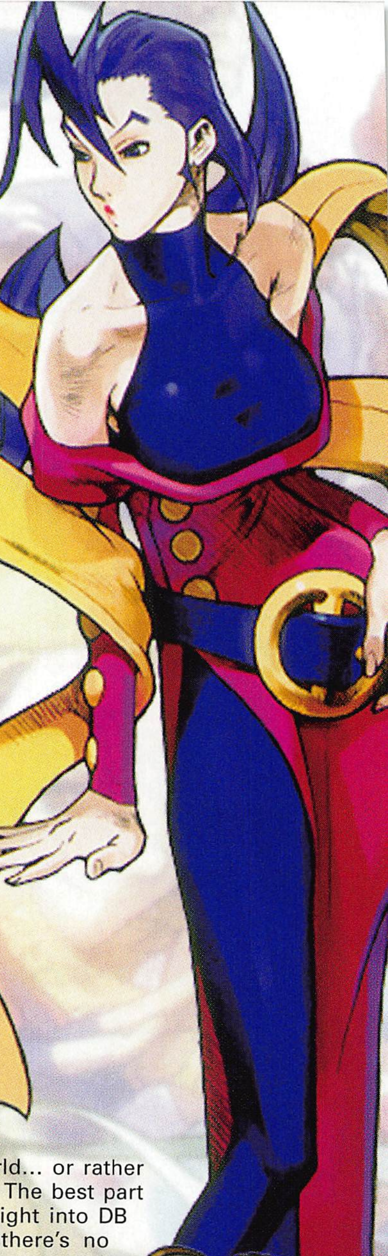
R REVIEW











I know, I thought we'd seen the last of the Saturn when we removed it from the line of consoles featured on our cover. Plus, I thought we'd basically seen the last of *Street Fighter Zero 3*, with multiple previews on PlayStation AND Dreamcast. But alas, I was wrong, besides the upcoming American final of DC *Alpha 3*, now we have the import version of *Zero 3* for the Saturn. So you can imagine I was less than thrilled to write this review of a game we'd covered to death countless times before. Besides, the Saturn has a history of perfect ports for Capcom fighters, provided you have the 4-meg RAM cart.

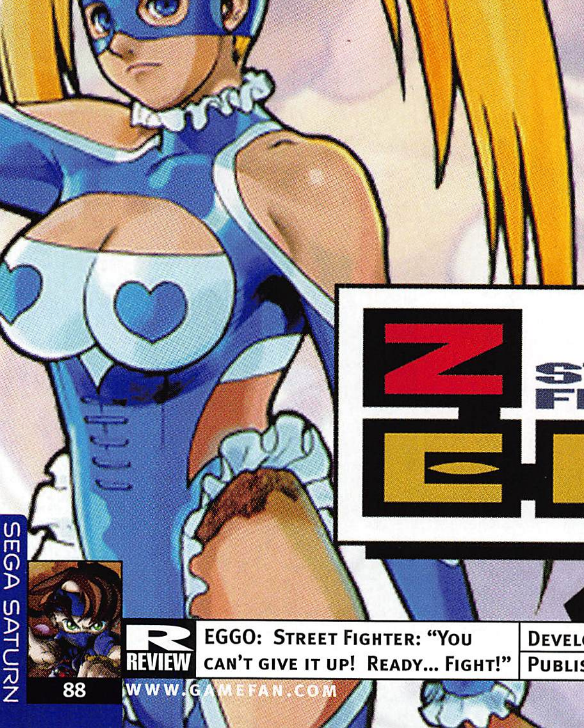
But I quickly discovered there's more to this version of *Zero 3* than meets the eye. In fact, it sounds crazy but, the Saturn version of *Zero 3* is better than the Dreamcast! How can that be? How can an arcade perfect *Zero 3* on the Dreamcast be surpassed by an older system? Two words: "Dramatic Battle."

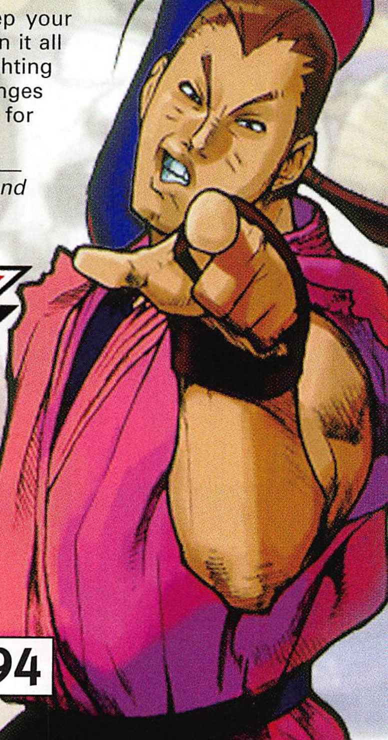
Yup, the Saturn and Dreamcast versions are both arcade perfect; well actually, the Saturn version might have a nanosecond of loading time and very slight slowdown, but for all intents and purposes, it's practically arcade perfect. All the frames of animation are there, and the backgrounds remain just as colorful as the arcade. But the real reason why you should own this *Zero 3* instead of the Dreamcast version is Dramatic Battle.

For those who don't know, Dramatic Battle is a feature which started back in *Street Fighter Alpha*. It lets two fighters take on a single opponent at the same time—three fighters onscreen simultaneously leads to full-on insane combos and unpredictable Street Fighting chaos. The PlayStation *Z3* allowed you to DB, but two of the three characters were the same (mirror match). The Dreamcast *Z3* expanded on the concept by allowing three human players to go at it 2-on-1. But both those games excluded the most useful feature, which the Saturn finally gives us: a human opponent vs. two different computer opponents at the same time. Sure it's fun to slap down two human challengers to prove your ultimate *SF* mastery, but it's hard to round up three people to do anything at the same time whenever you want to. On the other hand, you can always fly solo—one man against the world... or rather two cpus, but "the world" sounds more exciting. The best part about the Saturn's *Zero 3* is that you can go straight into DB with three completely different characters and there's no loading time to worry about.

So there you have it, one more reason to keep your Saturn **and** *Street Fighter* alive. I thought I'd seen it all in my many days of Street Fighting, but fighting against Ryu and Ken at the same time really changes the way you look at the game; I kinda feel sorry for M. Bison after all this time...

Eggo felt good about donning the Yoga shorts and reliving the Glory Days one more time.





Street Fighter Zero 3

R REVIEW EGGO: Street Fighter: "You can't give it up! Ready... Fight!"	Developer - Capcom Publisher - Capcom	1-2 Players Available Now Japan	Viewpoint Score: 94

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Cool Boarders 3 really tried to be *Cool Boarders*; really it did. But with Idol Minds behind the development and not UEP, CB3 was a different sort of animal all together. But what can ya say? Expecting Idol Minds to do anywhere near as good of a job as UEP is like asking Eddie Murphy to be funny. It's not like Idol Minds is a shoddy developer (think *Rally Cross 2*), but *Cool Boarders* is UEP's baby and as the song goes, "nobody does it better." Well, our crazy friends at UEP must have seen the mistake of their ways because they're back in the thick of it.

Cool Boarders Burrrn! is technically *Cool Boarders 3* for Dreamcast. Maybe it's the extended time away from the series, but it feels different. I don't think it's "Damn, these guys are past their prime" different; it's more like "Hey, it's not the same old stuff, yea!" different. Nintendo should take a bow as UEP takes some of the stuff that made *1080° Snowboarding* so good and full-on steals it for *Burrrn!* Course concentration is more on speed than technique. Obstacles aren't as frequent which is a break from *Cool Boarders 2*'s serious slalom style gameplay. In case you can't avoid an obstacle, the Y button acts as the Guard button. And believe me, you'll need it after careening into a couple of twenty ton rocks.

Stages like Emerald Forest (my fave) bring back frosty memories of *Cool Boarders* glory days. These same stages also blow the older games in the series out of the pond both visually and design-wise. Branches and various shortcuts make any stage utterly replayable. Emerald Forest, for example, has a couple of branch points, and I found one place that allows you to leap over a gap that gains you about five seconds.

Nothing's changed character-wise, they're all as wacky as ever. UEP hasn't lost its magic touch. Each character has a choice of gear and boards. Presumably, more characters can be unlocked by playing through the game. I hear Reubus in the background praying to the snowboarding deities that the Alien and Snowman make return appearances.

So do you wait and see if a U.S. publisher is smart enough to pick this one up? If you're me, you don't wait—you head down to your local import shop and fork over the cash. However, we have it on good authority that this one will makes its way across the Pacific before the end of the holiday season. Now Infogrames, about that NuRBS-based snowboarder...

Cerberus finally grabbed his Air Burton and bindings for a weekend of crazy snowboarding down the bunny slope. We'll let you know when he gets back from the intensive care unit.









REVIEW	CERBERUS: What would you do for a Klondike Bar?	Developer - UEP Systems	1-2 Players	Viewpoint Score: 85
		Publisher - UEP Systems	Available Now Japan	

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Bandai isn't known for particularly great games. The Wonder Swan is the company's only saving grace, and *GunPey*, too. But for the most part, Bandai can't hold a candle to publishers like—well, actually Bandai can't hold a candle to any publisher. I love *Gundam*... just take a look at my garage. At any given time, I'm building and painting all kinds of models, including *Gundam*. Yep, nothing like a long night in a poorly-ventilated garage, building models, painting them and then partaking in mock battles starring me as Amuro Ray, taking on the insidious Zaku forces in a bloody, bitter fight to the death. [**ECM's NOTE**: GameFan does not in any way condone the use of paint, glue, or other illicit substances in a closed, unventilated environment—Cerberus doesn't have three heads for nothing.] Anyway, the point is, I LOVE Gundam...until Bandai got ahold of them for video gaming a ways back.

Now have you ever done something despite the fact that you'll probably be disappointed to the nth degree? That's what I did when I decided to subject my Dreamcast to a likely poison. Now, I'm eating my words... and they taste a little bitter. Not only is *Gundam* a good game, it's a Bandai title. I'm not talking about "anything-is-better-than-*Tonic Trouble*" better either, *Gundam* is a legitimate purchase for mech aficionados.

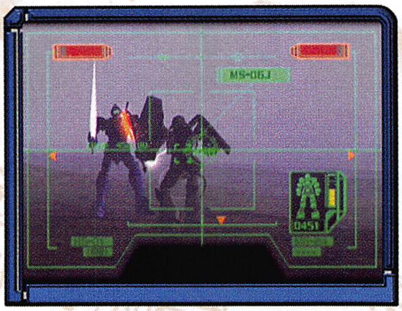
Be sure to allocate a couple of missions towards getting used to *Gundam's* versatile control. Initially, I thought *Gundam* had bad control—I was wrong (which is apparently the theme of this review). The analog thumb stick controls your Fang's head movement independently of its body. The D-pad controls forward and backward movement as well as turning. Pressing and holding the L shoulder button or double tapping in a specific direction with the D-pad initiates the jet boost. Your mech can block and swing its sword with the R shoulder button. Okay, now that you know the basics of mech control, I haven't even touched on the Lock-On or Zoom systems.

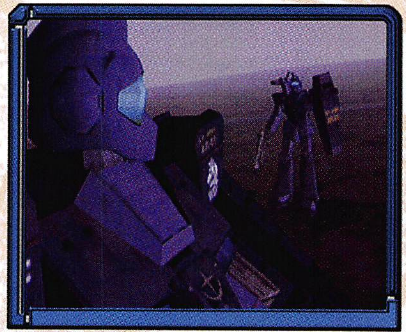
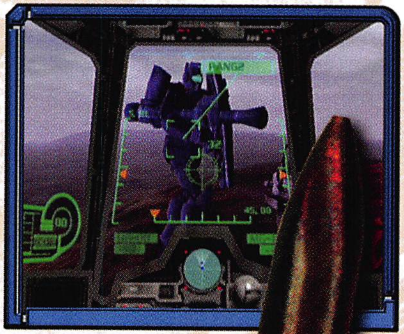
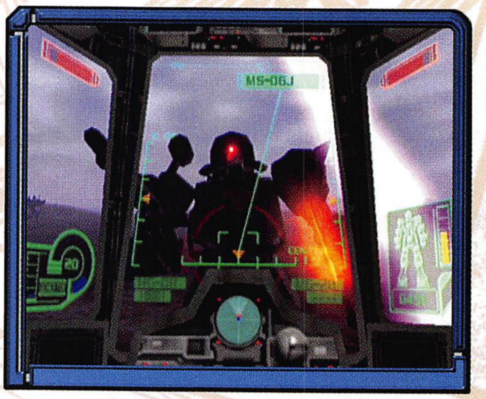
Each mission begins with a briefing. When you've entered the Front Lines, you can go at it madman-style without using any features, like map or AI modification. A map of your current mission is accessible in the sub-screen. In this same sub-screen, you can alter your team's course or primary objective. For instance, you can have your team protect you while battling or scouting for the enemy.

The Zaku will undoubtedly have the upper hand during your first encounter. I lost miserably in the beginning, but I managed to have fun while getting my titanium ass kicked. *Gundam* lends itself to learning the game system and its techniques. On some missions you might be protecting a convoy, while others will have you attacking an enemy unit head-on.

I don't have to tell you that *Gundam* looks as good as any other game. Some cut-scenes look like video footage. Graphics should never replace a good game, and I don't see any of that here. I guess now I should go do something that might disappoint me to the nth degree...

Cerberus would like to change the "AI" around the office to a kinder, gentler sort.







GUNDAM
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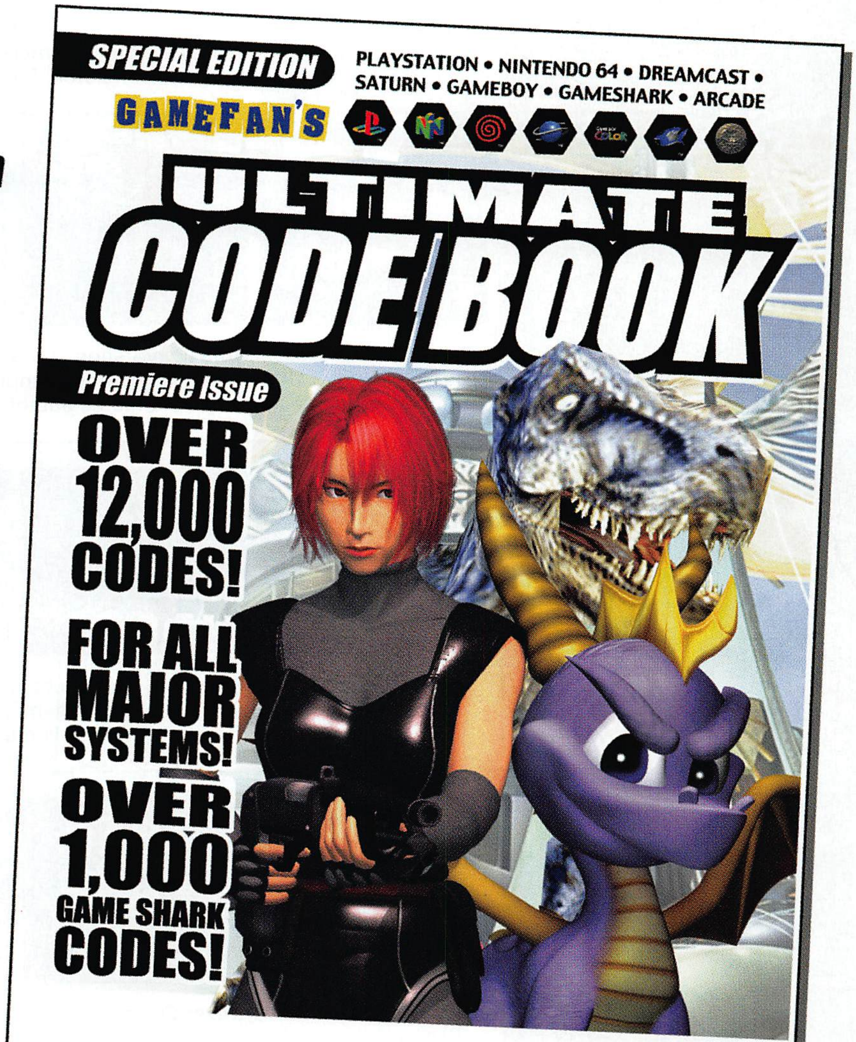
REVIEW	Cerberus: Gundam West Side Story...	Developer - Bandai Publisher - Bandai	1 Player Available Now Japan	Viewpoint Score: 89

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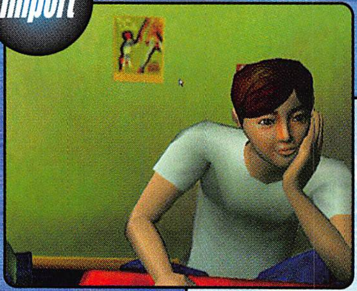
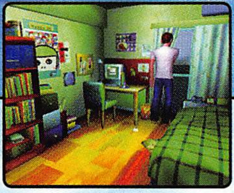
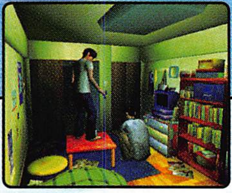
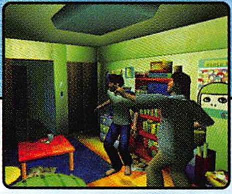
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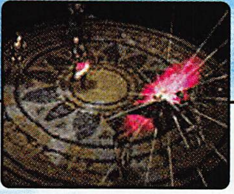

Roommania (Dreamcast, Sega) — It's one thing to have a virtual pet simulator. But now, for all those lonely gamers out there, you get to have a roomie simulator. Right...

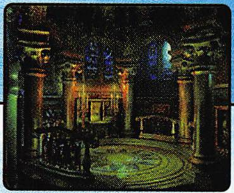
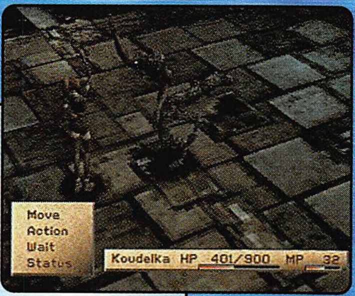







Super Robot Wars Alpha (PlayStation & Dreamcast, Banpresto) — The *Super Robot War* continues and now, Banpresto has the *Macross* mechs in the lineup! PS version to be out this year, DC next year.

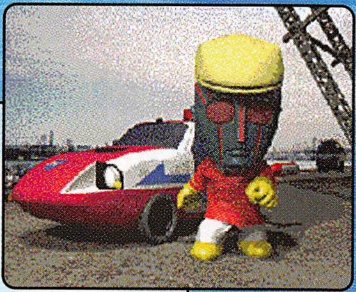



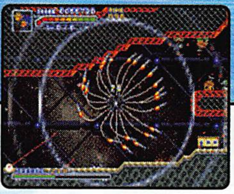
Koudelka (PlayStation, SNK) — Soon to be out in Japan this year, *Koudelka* is SNK's new RPG/adventure game. Cool setting, great voice acting, and a dark story make this one to watch out for.

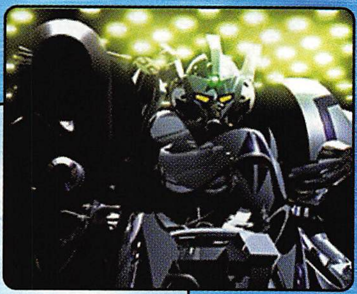






Super Riotous Adventure: Super Heroes Retsudan (Dreamcast, Banpresto) — Take some of the most famous rubber-suit heroes in Japan, put them in a DC action game, and you've got the idea, folks.

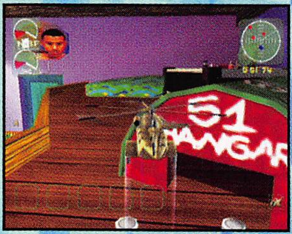



Bangaio (N64, Treasure) — The masters of addictive hardcore gaming action, Treasure releases their second action/shooter title on the N64. Yes, you can bet ECM will be tapping the window of the nearest importer whispering, "Open, open, open."


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EUROPA

Feature



This month in Europa we take a look at the much-anticipated* Toy Commander *for Dreamcast from French development house No Cliche (famous for the* Little Big Adventure *games with the creator of* Alone in the Dark *at its helm). And No Cliché certainly seems to be an apt title, with the marginal* Time Commando *being their only questionable release. Next month, we'll delve into all the goings-on at ECTS, with some new game announcements and word on the initial Euro-PS2 games.

Toy Commander/No Cliché Europa Feature

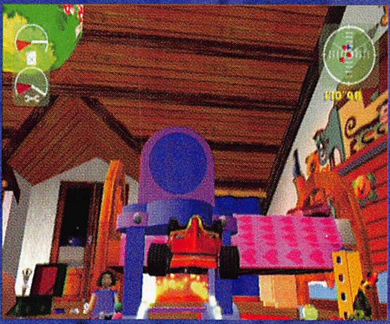
The French Connection

While we're continuously amazed at the quality of the Dreamcast's launch lineup, it's interesting to note that it's not the Japanese titles that are now the most anticipated—or the best, for that matter. I'm not dismissing *VF3* or *Sega Rally 2* (Fury would strike me down for that), but aren't most of us much more excited about *Trickstyle*, *NFL Blitz 2000*, and of course *Toy Commander*?

While Bizarre Creations' (now delayed) *Metropolis Street Racer* has received most of the press among the European-developed launch titles, the less obvious *Toy Commander* could become a real sleeper hit amidst the racing and sports games with it's undeniable French charm and <gasp> original ideas.

Toy Commander (known as *Gutherman* in its early days) is the brainchild of French developer No Cliché, who's fully owned by Sega. The team is led by Frederick Raynal who created Infograme's seminal *Alone In The Dark* (the true inspiration behind *Resident Evil*).



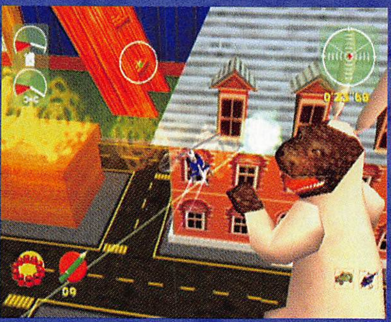


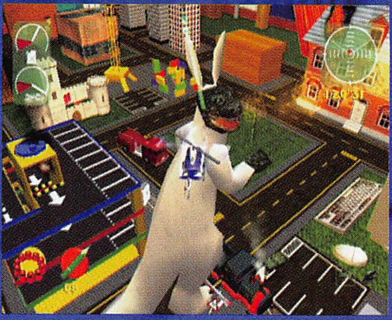
"It was the two LBA games that made Sega take notice and, in the end, buy the team to work exclusively on the Dreamcast."







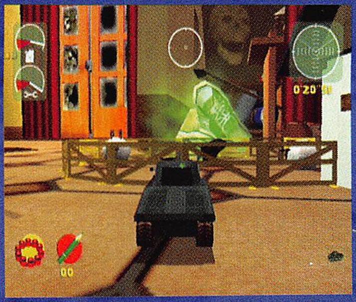


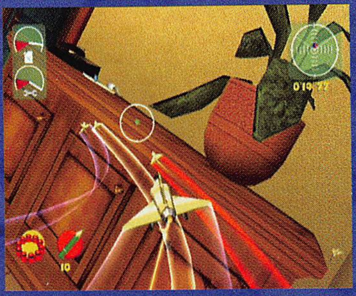


After the success of *AitD*, Raynal along with fellow Infogrames alumni Serge Plagnol, Didier Chanfray, Philippe Vachey, and Yael Barroz set up Adeline Software.

Now, most French games have a very distinct, err... French style, evident in Adeline games like the offbeat *Little Big Adventure* series. It was the two *LBA* games that made Sega take notice and, in the end, buy the team to work exclusively on the Dreamcast. *Toy Commander* is the first game to arrive from No Cliché and expectations are high on this cutesy arcade-style shooter. Make no mistake, the graphics in this game are very realistic, but the extensive color palette gives the game a nice surreal feel. There are dozens of rooms in the house that the action takes place in, and the environments look stunning.

There's plenty of nifty explosion effects which the Dreamcast produces with surprising ease. Expect the usual particle explosions and smoke effects along with great looking lighting and water effects.

















No Cliché's producer David Chomard has a great way of describing *Toy Commander*. Imagine a child playing (hmm, already reminds me of *GameFan*) with a miniature toy airplane that he carries through the rooms of a house while fantasizing about battling other toy world inhabitants. Thus, commanding the toys is your task in No Cliché's first Dreamcast game.

Anyone who played the E3 demo of *Toy Commander* certainly knows that this isn't a simulation (and you probably wouldn't be reading this if it were)—it's an action game packed with dogfights, races, and more than a little charm. The action is not limited to airplanes at all, there's a variety of vehicles such as tanks, jeeps, and space shuttles. Some of the 50 different missions require the player to switch vehicles in mid-mission to accomplish some of the tasks at hand—think of a toy-based *Blast Corps*.

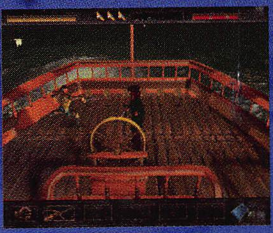
No Cliché is keen to point out that the controls are very much arcade-like so getting to grips with the various machines won't be difficult. The craft not only unleash bullets and flares, but it's possible to pick up troops and other items that are scattered across the landscape.

The team is led by Frederick Raynal who created Infograme's seminal Alone In The Dark (the true inspiration behind Resident Evil).

A game like *Toy Commander* is ideally suited for some intense multi-player action, and there will be a 4-player split-screen battle mode which hopefully will tear us away from our non-stop matches of *NFL2K* and *Quake 3*. And somebody can start up ye ol' broken record again, as *Toy Commander* will not feature online play due to Sega's lateness in delivering the necessary APIs... at least not in the U.S. and European releases... the Japanese release is another matter entirely.

But *Toy Commander* isn't the only product pouring forth from the wonder factory that is No Cliché. They're currently hard at work on their second Dreamcast creation, *Agartha*. It seems the creators of *Alone In The Dark* are going back to their roots, as this game is described as a horror/adventure with innovative character control (what exactly that amounts to we'll have to wait and see). But for now, it's all about *Toy Commander*. Now, where did I put that pencil sharpener? **Riot**

Games previously created by No Cliché (As Adeline Software)





No Cliché is based in Lyon, France and employs 22 people including graphic artists, programmers, designers, and musicians.







LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE
PC CD-Rom
October 1994
PlayStation
March 1997

TIME COMMANDO
PC CD-ROM &
PlayStation
Late 1996

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE
PC CD-Rom June 1997

GameFan Sports

So what is it with all the motocross games coming out this season? Does ESPN 2 have some sort of stake in the video games industry? Did the half dozen fans of the sport petition? Whatever the reason, they are here and, if EA has anything to say about it, here to stay.

As you can see by the scores, the one bright spot in sports this month was the stellar *NHL FaceOff 2000*. Essentially it is *NHL 94*, on the PlayStation; and as any hockey fan knows, that is the best hockey game ever made. Now I haven't played the final of *NHL 2000* yet (hmmm, where is it anyways?) but it will be hard pressed to best this gem. That makes three 989 Sports titles in a row that have been impressive... a record for them. *NCAA Final Four*, however, may signal the end to that streak...

It's official, *NFL 2K* is the greatest thing to ever happend to the video game console. I'm hooked and it looks as though I may not be able to break away from it. Space constraints forced me to cut its coverage last issue, but as I said in the review, do you really need a spread to convince you that it is THE must-have on the Dreamcast? I hope not.

If any of you read our website you may have noticed that one of the Quotes of the Day was from me, stating that if I ever get so jaded as to not be impressed by a game like *NFL 2K*, just kill me. I said that because a certain magazine, that will remain nameless (I will tell you, however, that its initials are E, G, and M) scored it lower than it deserved, accusing it of being nothing more than eye candy. Aye caramba! I wonder if they actually played the game...?

Having said that, I now brace for the fallout... I'm such a trouble maker =) [editor's note: we apologize for El Niño's emote, but he has been playing too much *EverQuest* and it is becoming a nasty habit of his].

Lord, I'm not a religious man but I kneel before you now with one single request: make *NHL 2K* as good as *NFL 2K*. Joe-D and I are beside ourselves with anticipation for this title. Having to wait until next year to play it is almost more than I can bear.

I just recently attended a Sega Gamer's Day and saw two more upcoming sports titles: *Virtua Striker 2* and tennis. Both are coin-op conversions and look sweet. I'm tellin' you people, buy a Dreamcast now if you don't already own one. The sports titles that are coming out for it will blow you away.

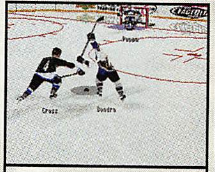
I am actually going to Vegas to see the De La Hoya fight with Midway later this month, so I will fill you in when I get back. Until then, play lots of *FaceOff* and *NFL 2K*. It'll make you smile.. —*El Niño*





Here it is, 16-bit gameplay in a 32-bit package. *FaceOff 2000* is a wonderful hockey game that has the speed, control and AI to make it a classic. If you are a fan of hockey sims this is an absolute must. It may very well be the last game I play, recreationally, on a 32-bit system.

G 8 C 10 P 9 M 8 O 7 **94**



NHL FaceOff 2000
PlayStation
989 Sports



Yeah, yeah, I'm writing another sports viewpoint. Thing is, that's because *FO2K* plays like NHL '94 on Genesis—the undisputed king of hockey video games. Super-fast play, smooth animations, and solid hockey action that almost made me give up my LA Kings season tickets…almost.

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 7 O 6 **92**



Ricky Carmichael's first motocross game will leave you feeling listless. For a title like this to work, you need better graphics, more tracks and more bikes; a couple more modes wouldn't hurt either. You will have to be a major fan of the sport to want to check this out.

G 6 C 6 P 7 M 6 O 7 **69**



Championship Motocross
PlayStation
THQ



Gotta agree with Niño on this one. *Ricky Carmichael Racing* is about as compelling as a Lifetime special... when viewed on valium. Much more attention needed to be paid to the features and modes in order to ensure replay value. Wait for something better.

G 6 C 7 P 7 M 5 O 6 **70**



You should never go on looks alone unless it is a one night stand. And that is about all you will get outta *Monaco* with its lack of personality. Formula fans will want to check it out, but everyone else should stick to something a bit more exciting like *Tokyo Extreme Racing*.

G 9 C 7 P 6 M 5 O 3 **69**



Monaco Grand Prix
Dreamcast
Ubi Soft



If you're looking for a boring racing game with great visuals, then *Monaco GP* is right up your alley. Nice graphics aren't enough to make up for the substandard control and gameplay that's as fun as a lobotomy. An F1 fanatic's dream, but not mine.

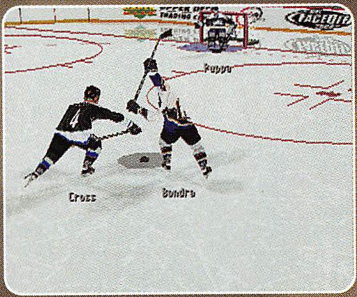
G 9 C 6 P 6 M 6 O 5 **72**



WHERE'S NIÑO? Can you pick sports editor El Niño out of this group of magazine editors and Fox Interactive employees (ok, and Glen Hoffman, too)? Extra points if you can spot Cerberus' brother. Be first to guess it right and you'll receive a free copy of an upcoming Fox sports title.

NHL FaceOff 2000







PlayStation

Developer: Solworks
Publisher: 989 Sports
Available: Oct.
of Players: 1-8

R Review

Remember when I said that EA Sports had managed to top last year's *NHL 99* with its *NHL 2000*? Well, they're gonna need all the help they can get, having now played *NHL FaceOff 2000*. What on earth happened down at 989 Studios? Did they actually listen to the complaints people had about their games? Well, whatever the case, it was to our benefit. *FaceOff*, like *GameDay* and *GameBreaker*, has made a total turnaround and could very well <gasp> (please don't make me say it!)... topple *NHL 2000* as best hockey game of the year.

Hockey fans always refer to *NHL 94* when speaking about perfection in a hockey video game. It may not have been the best *simulation* ever, but its control, speed, and understanding were as good as it gets. Since the dawn of the 32-bit era, the AI, graphics, and attention to detail have gotten better. What has suffered has been the pure gameplay that highlighted the 16-bit counterparts. Believe it or not, *FaceOff 2000* has managed to come the closest, of any current 32-bit hockey sim, to recapturing that gameplay... seriously.

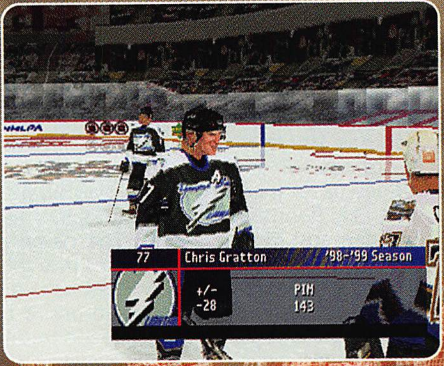
In delivering the closest facsimile of the real thing, *FaceOff 2000* still trails *NHL 2000* by a few steps. The commentary isn't nearly as good, the players don't move as realistically, and the attention to important details isn't as scrutinous; EA always wins this battle. What *FaceOff* does that is so impressive is deliver a game with incredibly responsive control and blistering speed.

This game has a slide bar that allows you to adjust the speed. When you kick it up to about 75%, the gameplay is absolutely frenetic! Like in *NHL 94*, everyone corners on rails and puck movement is quick. Fast reflexes are as important here as any understanding of basic hockey fundamentals—even more so. *FaceOff* definitely has a hint of arcade in it.

> **"Hats get thrown on the ice after hat tricks!"**

The AI is better than in past versions, as are the graphics. Fighting is in there, although it's as futile as in every other game. Some of your old faves are back though... and this may be what excites me the most. Hats get thrown on the ice after hat tricks! Hooray! Listen to that siren after goals... oh, it's so sweet. Then, there are the stats... *FaceOff* records all the great stats like 'Most Goals In A Period,' 'Most Saves,' and 'Most Shots In A Game'—just like in... you guessed it... *NHL 94*.

NHL FaceOff is a fantastic hockey game. Essentially *NHL 94* all over again, this is the type of game that will have you playing old-time video game hockey... not just reminiscing about it. **EN**

Monaco Grand Prix

Dreamcast **R** Review
Developer: Ubi Soft
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Available: Now
of Players: 1-2







Here's a gaming maxim: Graphics go a long way in making sub-par games palatable. Hard-core gamers scoff at such a notion, insisting that it's all about gameplay, but please. Like anyone would've played *Fight For Life* if it had had a good combo system. If you have an average-playing game with superb graphics, you'll deliver a title that will please the masses.

It's on this gaming postulate that I say *Monaco Grand Prix* is worth a look. A staggeringly anemic game on both N64 and PlayStation, *Monaco* has been given new life with the help of the Dreamcast's graphics capabilities. For fans of Formula One games (and there must be a lot of you since companies keep putting them out), this will be bread and butter.

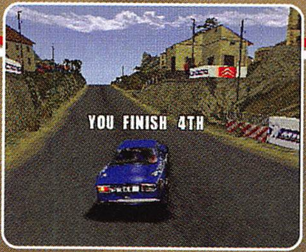
You get both the sim and arcade experience here. For people like myself, it's possible to pick up the controller and just jump into the game. I can run a single race on the Championship Circuit without having to worry about the customizing and tweaking of cars. I can choose from several racing teams, almost two dozen tracks, and four camera angles... all this without worrying if my tires are hard enough or if the draft should be changed.

Sim heads can do all of the above, but they have the option to customize the car configurations in 15 different areas. They can worry about the track conditions, prevailing weather, and whom they're racing against. The physics engine makes for a realistic driving experience, and the track layouts will challenge the best drivers.

The only problem is that the game lacks "oompf." *Monaco Grand Prix* remains, for the most part, uninspired. Finding personality in this game is harder than in the green room of the Ricki Lake Show. Unlike other types of racecar driving (NASCAR in particular), *Formula* doesn't have the same sense of speed and flair. Showmanship is needed to make it compelling... in real life and in this title. The fact that it's a first-generation Dreamcast game means that this average racing experience will gain longevity based on its good looks alone. Now where's my copy of *Rayman 2*? **EN**

Need for Speed: V-Rally 2

PlayStation **P** Preview
Developer: Infogrames
Publisher: EA
Available: Now
of Players: 1-4







It is actually entitled *V-Rally 2 presented by Need For Speed* but trying to fit that into the title bar would have driven Reubus over the edge. Besides, the *Need For Speed* team had about as much to do with this title as my little sister. But, this world, name recognition is everything and goes a long way in selling product usually on its way to the garbage bin.

Not that *V-Rally 2* is on of those titles. It is, in fact, the sequel to one of the most enjoyable racing games on the PlayStation. Expect more of the same great driving with new cars, better graphics and what I like to call a Butt-Load (the trademark is soon to come) of tracks. Toss in a track editor and you've got a reason to pull yourself away from *Gran Turismo 2*.

While mostly a straight-up arcade game, *V-Rally* does have licensed rally cars; 16 in fact. It also has 10 old model rally cars (and no, Herbie is not one of them) to unlock. There are four modes to race and the stages number 80, spanning 12 countries (including such locales as Sweden and Monte Carlo). The game engine is brand new, so don't expect the same look or feel as the first... expect better! Reubus is anxious to see how they could possibly improve the headlights from the first, which were incredible. This game will remain a white-knuckler, which is good because, with the exception of *Gran Turismo 2*, there isn't much in the way of exciting race games this season, for the PlayStation.

More speed, more mud and more tracks. What else could a rally fan hope for in a game? Maybe Herbie... (Reub's note: Or maybe, just maybe, hitting a blade of grass on the side of the road won't send the car tumbling for 5 minutes—my only beef with the first.) **EN**



NCAA Final Four 2000

P Preview — Developer: 989 Studios — Publisher: 989 Studios — Available: Nov. — # of Players: 1-8







The second 989 Sports title covered in this month's section, *NCAA Final Four* is not exactly setting the world ablaze. *FaceOff* has catapulted itself back into the hunt for top hockey title, but *Final Four* seems to be stuck in neutral. This may only be a preview, but I'm very skeptical about this title's ability to make the kind of forward leap that was evident in *GameDay*, *GameBreaker*, and *FaceOff*. If anything, *Final Four* looks to be more akin to *MLB 2000*, which is also stuck in that no-man's land of crummy games.



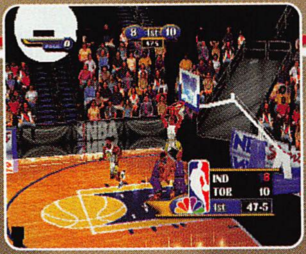
So what do I see in this early version that causes me to question *Final Four's* ability to produce? Well, for starters, I can't make out a single improvement over last year's version... not a single one. Sure, the game touts some new stuff like more mo-cap, better player models, and the rest of the standard upgrades; but it has done little to change the game. I dare say that it looks as though the shot meter (*Final Four's* one original idea) has been tweaked, but that's it.

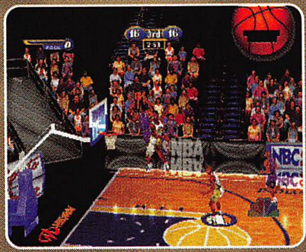
This leads to the second problem: play control. Seemingly unchanged from *Final Four '99* are the animations. This is a problem because the jump and dribble animations slowed down gameplay, resulting in sluggish control. This hindered last year's version and looks to hinder this year's as well.

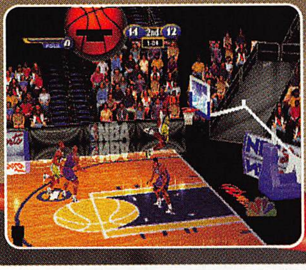
NCAA Final Four 2000 has a long way to go to prove itself in my eyes. Maybe this is the red-headed stepchild of the 989 line-up, but if it ever wants to compete with *March Madness*, it will have to make the kind of improvements that have revitalized the three aforementioned 989 Sports titles. Hey, they still have a month to fix it though... **EN**

NBA Showtime

P Preview — Developer: Midway — Publisher: Midway — Available: Nov. — # of Players: 1-4

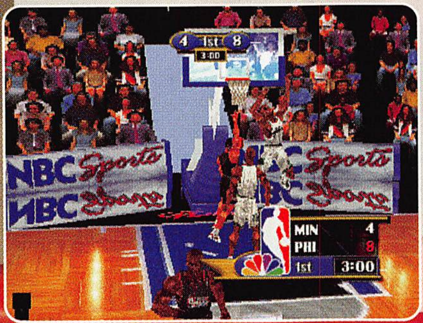






Say to yourself, "it's only a preview, Niño, it's only a preview." *NBA Showtime*, a highly entertaining coin-op and soon-to-be Dreamcast title, has taken a nose dive steeper than Kathleen Turner's career. This is the point where I say there are certain games that the PlayStation just can't handle (cause we know the developers of this game are on the ball).

Maybe I've become jaded because of the excellent gameplay and superb graphics of the aforementioned versions, but PlayStation *Showtime* is uglier than that cousin your Uncle Elmer has locked in his attic. Yes it's a preview, but at what point in a game's development do you hoist the white flag and say we surrender? Hell, *Superman* had two years to fix its elephantitis, and they never got it right (I'd like to apologize on behalf of the gaming editors' community for not warning you earlier about *that* game). And because of the *Superman* snafu, I'll say right now that unless major improvements are made, it will be a disaster.



The essence of *Showtime* remains the same. The strategies, power-ups, and moves are all the same. The commentary's in there, as are all the players and secrets. The problem is that the graphics are horrible and the slowdown is inexcusable; the tip-off has slowdown right now! I know that much of the slowdown can be eliminated by optimization, but can they fix that much? Lord, I hope so.

I am harsh only because I have great admiration for this game. Button-pounding arcade sports games don't get much better than *NBA Showtime*, but trying to jam it into a 32-bit machine may end up being like getting Roseanne into a size 8 dress—it may work... but would you really want to see the end result? **EN**



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Sega Dreamcast

Supercross Circuit

PlayStation **P** Preview | Developer: 989 Sports | Publisher: 989 Sports | Available: Winter | # of Players: 1-2

How do these trends get started? All of a sudden there are three licensed supercross/motocross games hitting the shelves at the same time. Did I miss something? Probably... I tend to miss a lot now that I've started to play *EverQuest*.

Supercross Circuit will be a fully licensed motocross and supercross simulation. Pro riders such as Steve Lamson, John Dowd, Jeff Emig, Mike LaRocco, Larry Ward, and Greg Albertyn will be included for you to either play as or challenge in a race. There's 20 tracks to race on, and they're all authentic racing venues. Pull your high flying stunts in places like the Pontiac Silverdome, Sam Boyd Stadium, and Steel City Raceway. Or, if that doesn't float your boat, you can always go into the track editor to create your own course... "Ten thousand gallons of mud!"

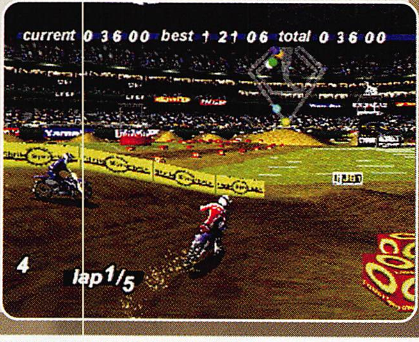
A physics engine was developed just for this game in hopes of giving you the most realistic racing experience. Called EnviroFX™, this engine emulates track conditions and how it feels for a 200lb supercross bike to hit jumps at 75mph. Somehow I don't think the Dual Shock will be able to simulate the impact when you eat it, pulling off an aerial trick.

As with other games of this ilk (they're already sounding like the same game, and it's only the first generation), you'll see changes in the track as the race progresses, whether it's ruts in the mud or rain water collecting in puddles.

It all sounds good but the question is: How does it play? Answer: no idea; it's still too early to make any judgements. Let's hope it's better than *3Xtreme*. Sheesh, another game like that and I may have to eat a bullet. **EN**









Championship Motocross featuring: Ricky Carmichael

PlayStation **R** Review | Developer: Funcom | Publisher: THQ | Available: Now | # of Players: 1-2

Of the many motocross riders currently on the circuit, Ricky Carmichael is one of the most prolific. So prolific in fact, that he managed to land his very own video game! *Championship Motocross featuring Ricky Carmichael* is more than just a long-winded title; it is one of the four bike-related sports games to hit the shelves this holiday season.

What used to be called *D.I.R.T.*, *Championship Motocross* has the added advantage that it is the first of the motocross/supercross games to hit shelves. This is important because it won't take much for EA and 989 to top this mostly lackluster title, considering how lean the game is on features.

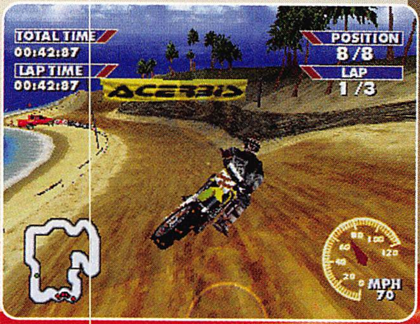
When I say lean on the features, I am referring to the number of bikes and tracks that you can race. While there are 9 licensed bikes to drive, you will only be able to play a total of 12 motocross and supercross tracks. While some variety can be found in the customizing of the bikes and the weather conditions, it still has a pretty shallow bottom. A fourth generation PlayStation game should bring much more than that to the table.

Championship Motocross does have a pretty good physics model, but the control is still a bit twitchy and the graphics are currently not on par with other PlayStation titles. While you can perform a great many stunts, the gameplay is otherwise a bit shallow—a problem I am seeing in all of the motocross titles currently in development.

Maybe Carmichael's name may have the clout to draw in fans of the sport, but the rest of the gaming world will raise nary an eyebrow at this wholly unoriginal and uninspired title. File this one away in the category of Novelty. **EN**









Supercross 2000

Nintendo 64 — Preview

Developer: MBL Research — Available: Fall
Publisher: EA Sports — # of Players: 1-2

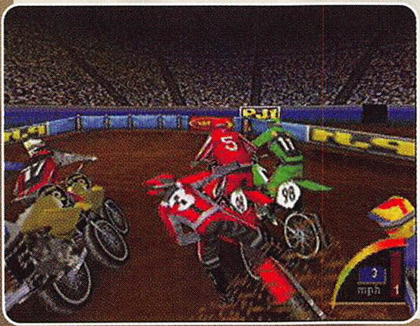






Hey wait a minute, didn't I just write about this game? Dirt bikes, knee pads, and Supermans. No, it's not a Russ Meyer film, but *Supercross 2000*—EA's latest attempt at franchise building.

OK, so it isn't the lacrosse game I asked for, but I'll take a niche sports game whenever I can. EA Sports has decided to go into partnership with the world's supercross circuit in an attempt to broaden the sport's audience—and to generate another EA Sports franchise.



As you can see by the space allotted in this section, motocross and supercross games are beginning to sprout like weeds. *Supercross 2000* will feature all the same modes as the other titles, relying on the appeal of its licensed riders and stout engine to draw gamers. There are 25 supercross riders in the game, including the sport's most prolific stuntmasters, Mike Metzger and Brian Deegan. Having seen what these guys can do in person, it'll be a treat to get the chance to execute the same gravity-defying maneuvers at home.

As with all EA Sports titles, *Supercross 2000* will feature dual commentary from Art Eckman and David Bailey (I'm sure that means something to somebody). The physics engine is impressive, and the game allows for you to permanently alter the track, by creating ruts and grooves with your tires. The only problem may be the control, which makes the game a bit uncomfortable to play. It's still early in development, so hopefully this problem can be fixed.

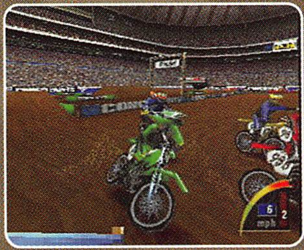
For the final product, EA hopes to bring the whole supercross experience to the N64. Whether or not this will help your knowledge grow is another matter, so don't stop watching *RPM Tonight* just yet... **EN**

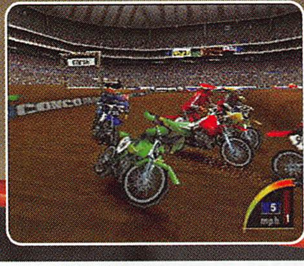
Supercross 2000

PlayStation — Preview

Developer: MBL Research — Available: Fall
Publisher: EA Sports — # of Players: 1-2







A game featuring Mike Metzger and Brian Deegan! What, never heard of them? Well, EA Sports is out to change that. These two guys are prominent freestyle supercross riders, currently wowing audiences across the country with their aerial acrobatics. But, unless you watch ESPN 2 at 3 AM, chances are you ain't gonna catch their act.

Supercross is growing in popularity, though, and far be it from a game company not to tap into it before it becomes as tired as, say, snowboarding...



Supercross 2000 will attempt to bring the excitement of the burgeoning sport to the PlayStation. Compete on mogul-riddled curcuit tracks in racing mode, or take to the air in freestyle mode. The game will include 23 of the world's top supercross and motocross riders (and no, I don't know the difference between the two, and neither do you, so just roll with it) along with Metzger and Deegan. If you want, you can create a rider and customize him as you see fit.

The physics engine implemented to give the game a real feel, is impressive. The attention to detail will be intense, ranging from major areas like stunts, to minor extras like the ability to alter the track with the ruts and grooves left by your bike tires.

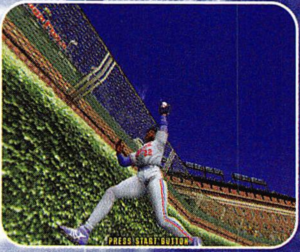
To make sure the game has the needed depth to make it more than a curiosity, there will be a career mode and a season mode. Deegan and Metzger also helped developers design a track specifically for freestyle racing. See just how many times you can pull off a nac-nac, heel clicker or Superman before you finish the course.

A very niche sport, EA hopes *Supercross 2000* can generate some interest in the sports gaming community. Look for the ad campaign on ESPN 2 at 3 in the morning.. **EN**

QUARTER CRUNCHERS

WORLD SERIES 99™

GO TO THE DREAM BALLPARK



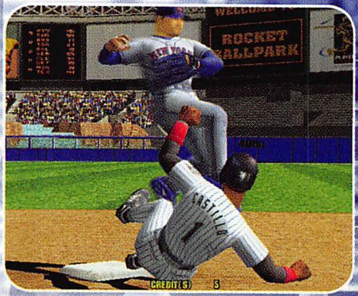
While I'm not as much a sports geek as El Niño, I've always appreciated a solid sports game, especially when the big letters "SEGA" are slapped on the cabinet. Besides some forgettable ones (namely *SEGA CD Hockey* and *SEGA Sports NFL '97* on the Saturn... oh the pain), most of Sega's sports games have been among the best in the biz. So it's no surprise that Sega's newest arcade sports game, *World Series Baseball '99*, is one of the best looking and playing arcade sports games. In fact, it's probably the best-looking baseball game so far.

Running on the power of the NAOMI hardware for unrivaled visuals, *WSB '99* boasts motion captured heaven, as each MLB player has a jaw-dropping 1,800 motion captured frames! You'll see players grit their teeth in frustration, make bare-handed catches, stretch while walking to the plate, and display all their signature quirks in this game. For example, when Sosa hits a homer, you'll see him perform his two-hop start out of the batter's box. The graphics in this game are unparalleled, and since it's running on NAOMI hardware, a perfect Dreamcast translation should be pretty easy, right?

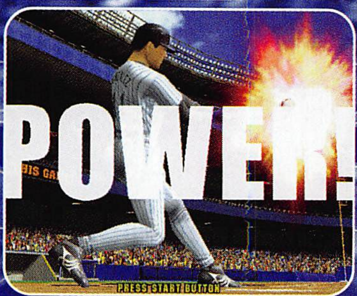
Like its arcade predecessor *Dynamite Baseball*, *World Series Baseball '99* features the "spring lever" joystick combination. These controls make it very easy to play, while also giving the player a realistic feel for the game when batting or pitching. When a man is on base, the screen splits horizontally to show the next batter, pitcher, and the runner on base, making it easy for two players to see everything. But the most unique feature in the game is the VMS (Virtual Management System) which allows the user to manage a team. You can design your lineup, place pinch hitters, use pinch runners, and even relieve pitchers when they tire. And with every player from the MLB available at your disposal, baseball games don't get any more real than this.

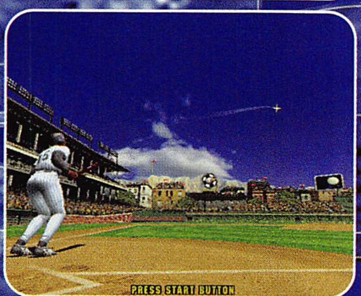
While it's not confirmed for the Dreamcast yet, *World Series Baseball '99* is what every mitt-carrying freak dreams of in a baseball video game. So, if you're wondering where the best-looking, best-playing baseball game can be found, grab some change, head to the nearest arcade which has *World Series Baseball '99*, and play ball! **Dangohead**











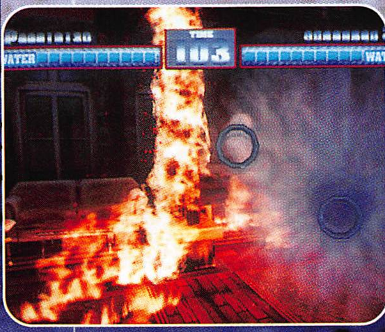
BRAVE FIREFIGHTERS™

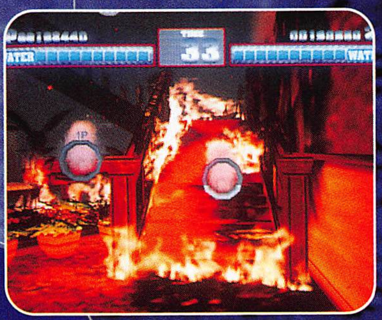
REAL LIFE HEROES

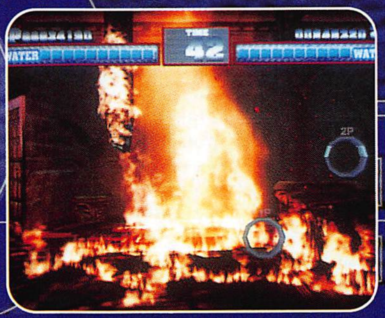
The life of a firefighter is a mix of courage (in facing fires), physical prowess (in handling all hazards), and a lot of luck... Seems like the perfect formula for an excellent game, yes? Well, unless you consider *Burning Rangers* an excellent title (not I), there haven't been any noteworthy games about firefighting. There have been great ideas for firefighting games, but the execution never gave players that thrill of danger or excitement which a firefighter encounters everyday. Well, Sega has decided to step up to the plate with *Brave Firefighters*, the latest in Sega's line of Real Life Career arcade games.

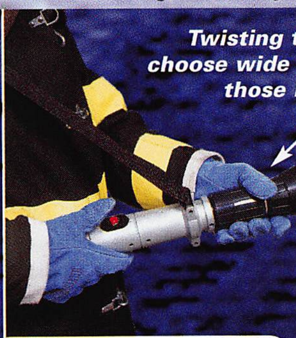
In its simplest form, *Brave Firefighters* is another gun game. Simply take the nozzle from the holster, aim, and shoot pressurized water to douse fires onscreen. But to prove that Sega truly loves you guys, a few twists have been added. First off, unlike your standard gun games, you don't have a lifebar. Time is your real enemy here, as you must extinguish fires as fast as possible to progress further into the game (via rails a la *HotD*). Secondly, there are no zombies, androids, or monsters to harm you. Fire is your sole target, and while you won't take damage from the flames, it spreads quickly if you don't put it out properly. Thus, you'll need to discover different techniques to douse the flames when the wind is blowing, when a gas leak occurs, or when a fire rages uncontrollably. Victims need to be saved ASAP if they catch on fire, and it's your job to keep the water on 'em lest they burn to death. And of course, your firehose has unlimited 'ammo' but prolonged spraying will decrease the pressure of the water flow. To re-pressurize the hose, you have to stop shooting for a while. And if that doesn't make *BF* standout, Sega's got some fiery visuals that will make you say "DAMN!"

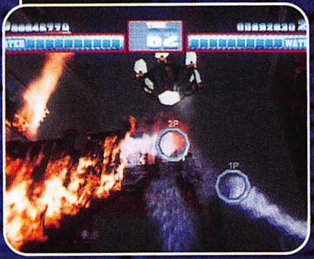
Visually, *Brave Firefighters* has some of the best special effects in an arcade gun game. The game runs on a modified NAOMI board called Hikaru, which contains a custom graphics chip developed by Sega and which has larger memory capacity than the standard NAOMI hardware. Using Hikaru was necessary in order to create the incredible 3D effects of dancing flames and spraying water. And the water from your nozzle can change shape from a single stream to a wide spray, depending which way you twist the nozzle. These fire effects are simply a sight to behold; every flame is shaped differently and their shape, intensity, and color will change accordingly as you spray them with water. Levels are all based indoors, with varying obstacles: kitchen stoves will explode from gas leaks, refrigerators will topple over, glass windows will fracture, and then there's backdrafts... All in all, *Brave Firefighters* is a top-notch arcade gun game with many unique elements, giving it lots o' replay value. And in this day and age of arcade games, we need more of those. **Dangohead**















Twisting the nozzle enables you to choose wide spray or a tighter stream for those hard-to-reach places...

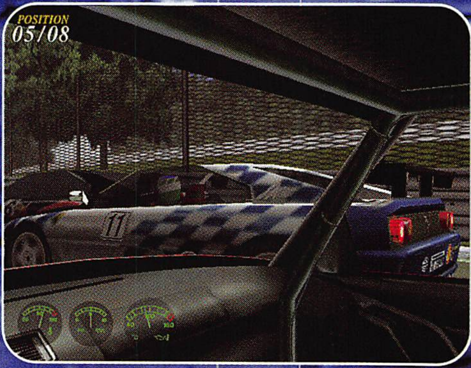
Hmmm... Dressing like this would get you hurt at most arcades around here...

QUARTER CRUNCHERS

F355







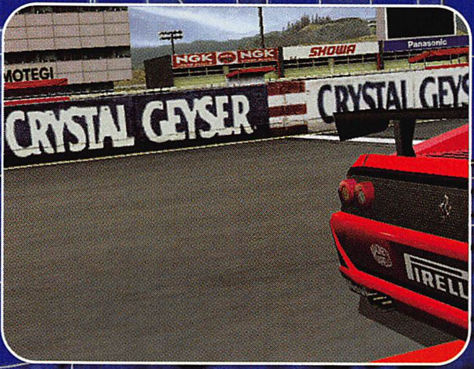
Mention the name Yu Suzuki to an arcade gamer and he'll think of the glory days of *Space Harrier*, *Outrun*, and *Virtua Fighter*. Whisper the word Ferrari to an automobile enthusiast, and he'll say something like "divine driving perfection." Bring up NAOMI hardware with a video game sausage, and you'll hear worship-filled talk about some of the best arcade hardware to date. So, what do you get when you put Yu Suzuki, a Ferrari, and four NAOMI boards together? The greatest arcade racing game in recent memory... and that's putting it mildly when talking about *F355 Challenge*.

The first thing you'll notice approaching Yu Suzuki's latest wonder is the huge size of the red cabinet, and there's good reason for that. Four NAOMI boards power this monster: one for each of the three monitors, and one for the sound effects. The three monitors represent the front, left, and right views, giving you a gloriously wide field of vision while speeding down the tracks. The chrome gearshift box, leather seat, and steering wheel have been ripped straight out of a Ferrari and bolted down in this dream machine. The cabinet itself has that "new car" smell to further enhance the feeling of being in a Ferrari. And when you finally get seated and start up a game, there's no denying the feeling that you're in for something very, very special.

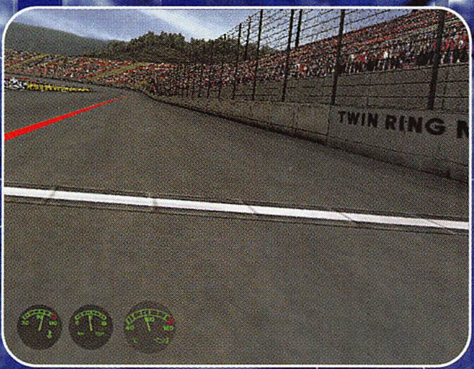


After putting a not-so-outrageous sum of money into the machine, the screen will prompt you to select from six different tracks: Montegi, Suzuka Short, Monza, Sugo, Suzuki, and Long Beach (easiest to hardest, respectively). The tracks are near-identical representations of actual tracks, and everything, from the dangerous curves of Suzuki to the buildings of Long Beach, has been faithfully sculpted. After selecting what course you're going to burn through, you choose what level to race as: beginner, intermediate, and simulator. Then, you'll choose what race mode to speed in. Training mode is exactly that—visual guides and voice commands tell you when to turn, where to brake, and how to recover. Driving mode puts you on the track alone, with no assistance from the computer. Finally, Race mode is where you get to compete against other drivers, with no guidance from the computer. And yes, there's only one car in the game folks; but when it's an F355 Ferrari, do you really need other cars to choose from?

In addition to having three screens to view the blazing landscape go by, there are Assist Functions available which are both innovative and helpful. Found underneath the gearshift box are four buttons, each one representing the four Assist Functions. These are: Stability Control (helps you recover after you've made a tight turn,), Traction Control (controls the power train in a wheelspin), Anti-Lock Braking System (prevents your brakes from locking), and the Intelligent Braking System (decelerates before every curve). All these modes can be turned on and off on the fly, depending which level you selected. All four Assist Functions are available in Beginner Mode, while Intermediate mode takes away the IBS function. Of course, Simulator has none of these features since it's the expert level. The Assist Functions allow players to take their time tailoring skills and mastering the subtle techniques of racing. And you'll need to take your time, because this is one of the hardest racers I've ever played. Power-slid-







challenge

"...you're in for something very, very special..."

ing, cornering, and proper recovery shifts are must-have skills, and they're much more difficult to pull off here, compared to *Ridge Racer* or *Daytona 2*.

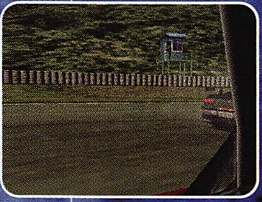
There's no doubt that *F355 Challenge* is the next level of racing games, not only in gameplay, but visuals as well. Stunning doesn't begin to describe the graphics in this game. If you viewed this game from afar, you wouldn't be able to tell if you were watching a video game or a live broadcast of Le Mans. With three NAOMI boards taking care of the visuals, there's nothing bad to say—simply, this game will take your breath away. The sensation of speed is awesome, the car models look phenomenal, and the very subtle special effects are amazingly true to life. The fourth NAOMI board, there solely for sound, delivers an audio assault of rock 'n roll music, screaming Doppler effects, and the screech of burning tires.

Surprisingly, the weather effects aren't spectacular, and with all the wondrous eye-candy you're ingesting, you'd think there'd be more real-time weather effects. But I'm just nit-picking and getting greedy. It's hard not to want more from this game. Once again, Yu Suzuki has set a new high watermark and sent the other developers back to the drawing boards. And whether you're an arcade racing fanatic or a casual newbie, you have to check out *F355 Challenge*. **Dangohead**



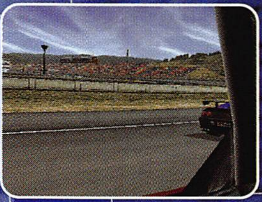




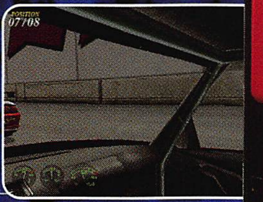


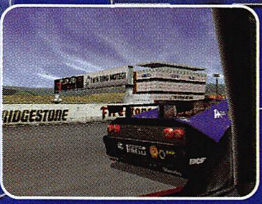
















4 NAOMI Boards!?!?



QUARTER CRUNCHERS

Street Fighter EX 2 Plus









Okay, there's *Street Fighter II*, *Street Fighter Alpha*, *Street Fighter III*, and I think there's one more... Oh, that's right, *Street Fighter EX*. The Arika creation and bastard child of the series, *EX* never celebrated much success. Now, I loved *Street Fighter EX* and its sequel, but does anyone remember seeing it? I don't think so. I have a theory why *EX* did so poorly since inception. The release of *EX* has always coincided with that of *SFIII*. 1997 saw both *Street Fighter EX* and *SFIII*. Then Capcom released both *SFIII: Second Impact* and yet another *EX*. This year it's *SFIII: Third Strike* and *Street Fighter EX 2 Plus*. Put it this way... BMW gives you the choice of a 3 series or a 7 series, which one do you take? The 4-cylinder coupe or the V8 super sedan? That's the predicament Capcom puts us in each time it launches two games nearly simultaneously.

Street Fighter EX 2 Plus is an upgrade to the tremendously popular <snicker> *Street Fighter EX 2*. Oddballs, Area, and V.Russo join the likes of Sagat as well as newcomer Nanase, sister of Hakuto. All the fighters from *EX2* are back, as is most of the cast from *EX Plus Alpha*, sans Sakura and Gouki, though they could be time released.

Guard Breaks, Super Cancels, and Excels remain a staple of *EX*, and *EX 2 Plus* is no different. Arika and Capcom must've worked on gameplay balance because cheesy characters like D. Dark have been toned down—way down. Though not everything is right in playland—Shadowgiest is still too much of a badass. This cloaked crazy can link almost any attack and it's not fair.

Overall,I like *EX 2 Plus*—it plays like old-school *SFII*. Another reason I enjoy *EX 2 Plus* is because it favors offensive players and not turtles. The graphics aren't the best out there, but they're adequate. If you manage to locate a board, give it a try. I could see this going onto NAOMI and then Dreamcast.

A downer for fans is that no *EX* games will appear on the PlayStation unless Capcom pays exorbitant royalty fees to the swindlers known as Arika. That's right, even though most of the characters belong to Capcom, there's some kind of stipulation in the contract that Arika will get some earnings from any game using its engine. That's wrong and someone at Capcom's Japanese office is probably cleaning toilets to this day. **Cerberus**



























San Francisco Rush 2049



As one of the most popular (and saturated) genres, racing has a lot of people to make happy—especially the dwindling number of arcade-goers. *SF Rush* has had a grip of loyal followers for years now and this number quadrupled when Midway introduced the Wavenet. For those of you that never saw Wavenet, it was *SF Rush: The Rock* with Internet play. Once you dropped four quarters you could race against players from all across the country on a speedy T1 connection. It was so popular that tournaments and leagues were setup. Sadly, it was short-lived and has since gone the way of Kid Fan's thinness. If you never played, you really missed out on one of the greatest gaming experiences going. Southern Hills Golfland had four machines set-up for Wavenet. A total of 8 players could race against one another in heated , run-'em-into-the-wall gameplay. Since I knew I was racing against real players (not the AI) I'd turn around and play kamikaze, tanking whomever was in first place. On certain nights Golfland regulars could be found at all four *Rush* machines the entire night.

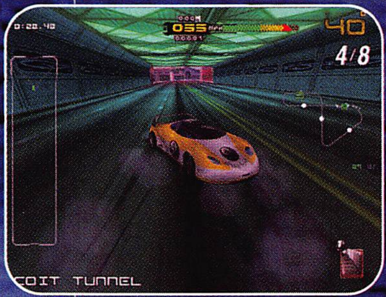


Atari just released the last Rush, *SF Rush 2049*, but don't expect it to do as well as *Rush: The Rock*. Don't underestimate the amount of players that went to arcades just to play Wavenet. I know *Rush 2049* will earn a deal—it's muy fun.

Rush 2049's primary change is that it's set in the future. The Integra, Viper and the rest are gone—replaced with something more likely to be seen in a Tamiya or Tyco catalogue. Yep, all the cars in *2049* are what Atari designers would like you to think we'll see fifty years from now—good thing these guys don't work in the automotive industry. All courses from Beginner on up have undergone the same overhaul as the vehicles. I thought *Rush* looked good before but the 3D accelerated graphics really pump now. In the words of a wise arcade mage, "Oooh, look at the pretty lighting—that's all you can say about the game." Actually, the lighting isn't all you will say about *2049*. Gameplay is rock solid (pun intended) as it's always been and the new shortcuts and scenery are another reason to go back to "The City."



Face it, if you played the other *Rush*es you'll love this one...if you didn't, well, there's a little game called *Ferrari F355 Challenge* racing into arcades near you soon. **Cerberus**

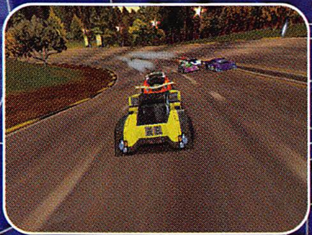


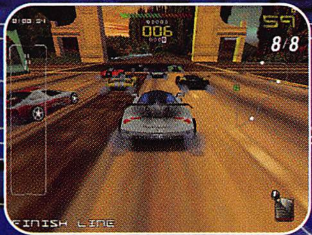




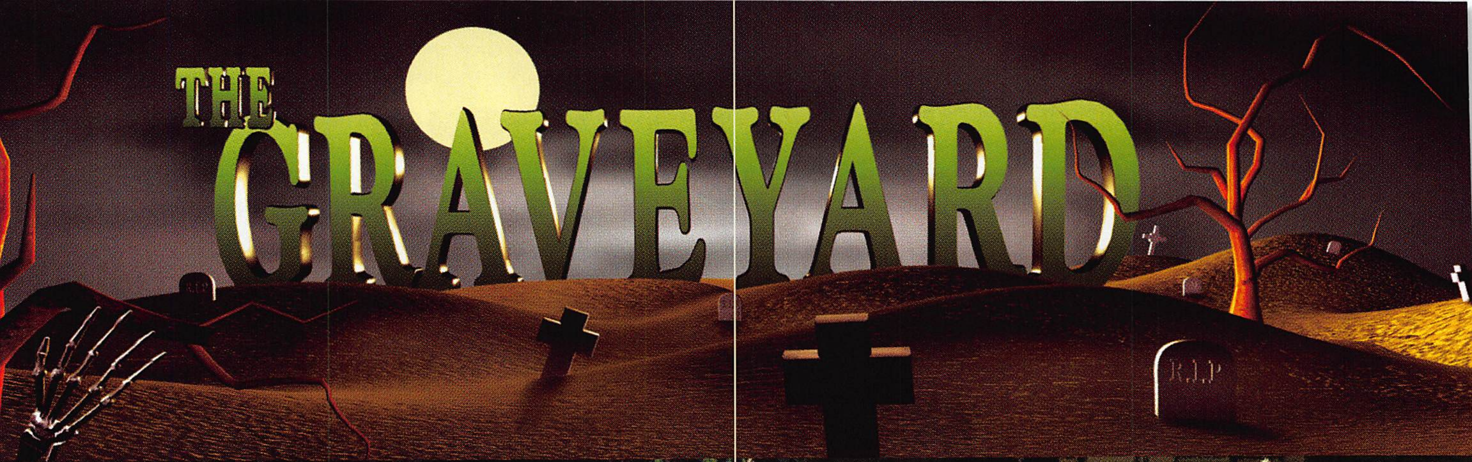


"...the 3D accelerated graphics really pump now..."



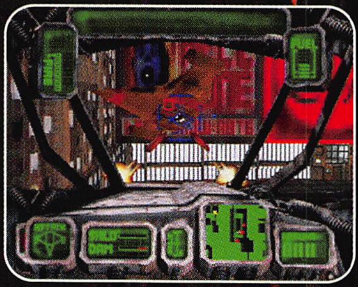
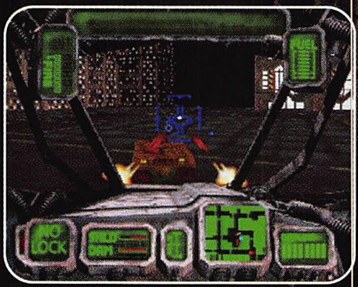
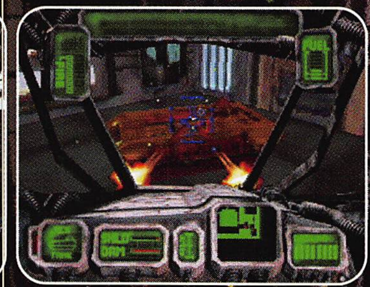






Yes, the Jaguar is indeed dead. After having engaged in a vicious battle with Sony's PlayStation and Sega's Saturn, this proud beast suffered a mortal blow (only equaled in viciousness by the early decision to leave half its brains on the operating room table). However, even in death the Jaguar lives on! This month's Graveyard focuses squarely on two new games for the 64-bit feline. Yes, indeed, a small company by the name of Songbird Productions has actually gifted Jag owners (the few, the proud) with two new games. So without further ado, let us delve into some of the last games the Jag will ever see...

SKYHAMMER

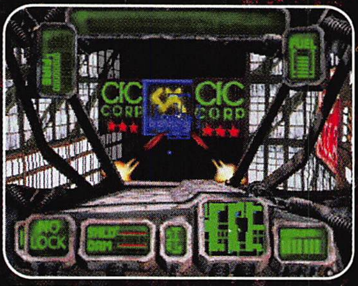
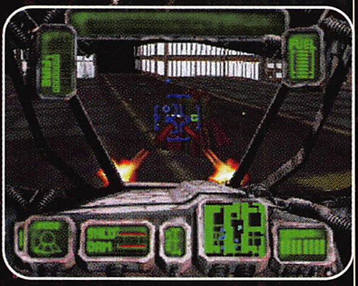

Rebellion was responsible for one of the single best Jaguar games ever: *Alien Vs. Predator*. If there was a single killer app, with mass-market appeal, this was it. However, in typical Atari fashion, it was completely fumbled—broadcasting the pretty cool commercials at 3 AM on UHF TV stations probably wasn't the best way to get the word out. And while GameFan sang its praises, it slipped silently into the sea of sleeper hits...the land of The Graveyard. Ah, but apparently that wasn't to be the last from Rebellion...in addition to that single blistering game they also had plans for the *Hellraiser*-esque *Legions of the Undead* and *Skyhammer*. And not surprisingly, Songbird Productions has also rescued the latter from gaming oblivion.

If this game had showed up prior to Psygnosis' *G-Police* that title would have been labeled a '*Skyhammer* clone' (a version did make it out on the last hardware iteration of Commodore's Amiga, btw). And that's pretty much what *Skyhammer* is. Flying around a monstrous futuristic city in your *Skyhammer* attack craft your out to blast baddies and make the world safe for law-abiding types everywhere.

"...make the world safe for law-abiding types everywhere..."

Graphically the game is almost exactly like *GP*, only running in more confined environs and at a lower res. While it doesn't feature incredibly blazing gameplay, it is decent fun. It certainly doesn't feature the full-blown arcadey feel of *Protector* but it's a pretty decent game in its own right. Complete various mission objectives and engage in the more arcade-oriented Battle mode featuring wave after wave of enemies minus that sticky little 'story' that's going on in the background.

And amazingly enough, the game will be produced on December 6th allowing you to grab it just in time for Christmas.



Protector









Upon completion of Tempest 2000, many were elated to discover that coding guru Jeff Minter's next project would be a blistering update of Eugene Jarvis' *Defender*, aptly titled *Defender 2000* (creativity that is only rivaled by the 'Super' or '64' tag Nintendo adores so much). And as the final days of the Jag crept in, *D2K* met with a warm, if limited, reception. Now not too many people know about this, but Bethesda Softworks was actually working on a Jag game around the same time that also paid 'homage' to *Defender*. Thing is, it was never finished. That's where Songbird Productions came in. They snagged the title and set out to finish the project realizing that even the limited Jag audience might appreciate another *Defender*-esque title. And with that, *Protector* was rescued from gaming oblivion...where games like *Violent Seed* still linger.



"...yes, it's pretty standard stuff, but still, it's Defender and it's a new Jag game... can't go wrong there, right?"



So what's the story? Well, near as I can tell a bunch of humanoids were on holiday, catching some rays, and generally minding their own business when a bunch of alien invaders decide to start an illicit para-sailing ring. Only problem is, they don't take 'no' for an answer...and unfortunately the net effect of taking one of their packages is that you die—somebody better call the Better Business Bureau. Of course, they needed to hire a lifeguard to handle these surly shysters, and that's where you come in...

Piloting the standard 'death to all that oppose you' spacecraft, you'll cruise across level after level of *Defender*-style play: shoot up enemies, grab power-ups, etc. All the things you'd expect to see in a good shmup (that's shoot-'em-up—thanks to www.classicgaming.com/shmups) based off of *Defender*. Rescue the humanoids and progress to the next level. And yes, it's pretty standard stuff, but still, it's *Defender* and it's a new Jag game...can't go wrong there, right?

So why should you care? If for no other reason than to realize that others do. Just because a system has a fairly shoddy reputation among the unwashed masses doesn't mean that it's so. Games like *Tempest 2000*, *Alien Vs. Predator* (crushes the recent PC version), *Iron Soldier*, *Cybermorph*, etc. were all great games in their own right—realizing that the Jaguar wasn't simply a last-ditch attempt from a failing company, but a viable platform for a lot of people (true, a lot of them were rabid Atarians...but I digress)...people that still love and want new things from their Jag.

While I'm not going to tell you it's a 'gotta have it' kind of game, it still makes a pretty cool collector's item (wait till Ebay gets hold of these, <sigh>) and a solid game in its own right. Check out songbird.atari.org headed up by Carl Forhan and tell 'em GameFan sent ya—it won't get ya anything cool, but it'll go a long way in showing that gamers want more than the latest DC or PS title in their collections.









That wraps this month's flashback look at the Jag. Special thanks go to Carl Forhan for providing the nifty Jaguar Dev Carts so that we could do this little feature. And remember, if these games sell well enough we will get more; it's that simple. Beyond these two we're already looking at a port of* Soccer Kid *and a title by the name of* Hyperforce*. And yes, we'll do our best to cover those as well, if only to show that somebody still cares ;) Also, perhaps we can dig something up on OMC Games'* Assassin *and 4-Play's* Battlesphere *if there's enough positive response on this edition of Graveyard. If you care, email me at ecm@gamefan.com and let me know.

Till next month, the crypt is closed... —ECM



AnimeFan

Anime, Manga, J-pop, Asian Live Action, Otaku Culture

A Note from Shidoshi...

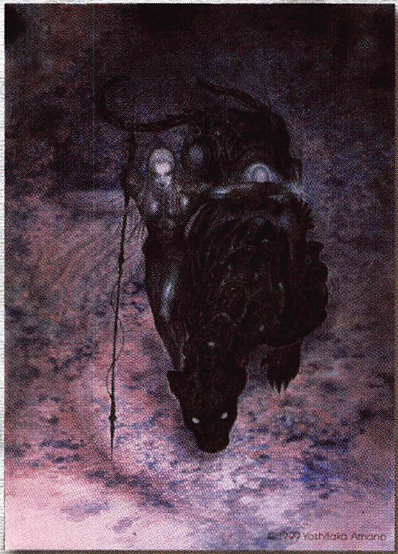
I think I figured out why I'm so far behind on playing new games — I won't stop playing the older ones. I'm still working on *Parasite Eve*, I'm playing through *Silent Hill* for the seventh time (determined to get full gold rankings), and my friends and I are still having mad marathons of *Asuka 120%, Groove on Fight, Last Blade, KOF '99 DC*, and *Critical Blow* (though *Soul Calibur* is certainly in heavy rotation). I guess I should be happy, because I'm giving some great games the time they deserve, but when I look at all of the games that I want to play that are both already out and are coming soon, the daunting list is just getting longer and longer. Oh well.

Special Feature

Yoshitaka Amano — HERO

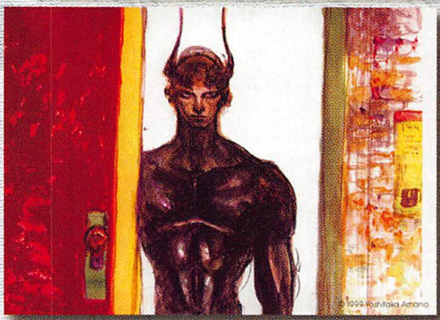
Yoshitaka Amano—the name mean anything to you? Even if you don't recognize it offhand, I'm sure you know who he is. If you've played a ***Final Fantasy*** game, if you've seen ***Vampire Hunter D***, if you've looked at Japanese art at all, you've seen Amano's work. Often called "Japan's most famous artist," Yoshitaka Amano has a very distinct style with characters and landscapes that is both elegant and exotic.

American fans will soon be given a chance to experience a whole new world of Amano's called ***HERO***, when it goes on exhibit October 5th. "[***HERO***] is a legend of the future, a tale of the quest for love and a search that takes him 10,000 years into the future and through many universes," said Amano when describing his new artistic creation and its central figure. "It is in the spirit of the great legends such as Odysseus in ***The Odyssey***, or ***The Quest for the Holy Grail***." The story is this: HERO is a man living in the twentieth century who falls deeply in love. 10,000 years later, he is reborn as a prince, who still holds in his heart a yearning to regain the love which he has lost. If he cannot find his love again, then he will be doomed to an existence of immortality. Together with a mighty cyborg companion, ***HERO*** sets off on a quest to reach a giant structure which holds 10 doors. Each door is a window to a new world, and he must conquer all 10 of the worlds in order to reach the top of the building where his long lost love sleeps. Collaborating together with Neil Gaiman on this new project, ***HERO*** will take many forms, from the art exhibit to a variety of merchandise which will be available, to a 3D CG animated opera based upon ***HERO*** and his quest.

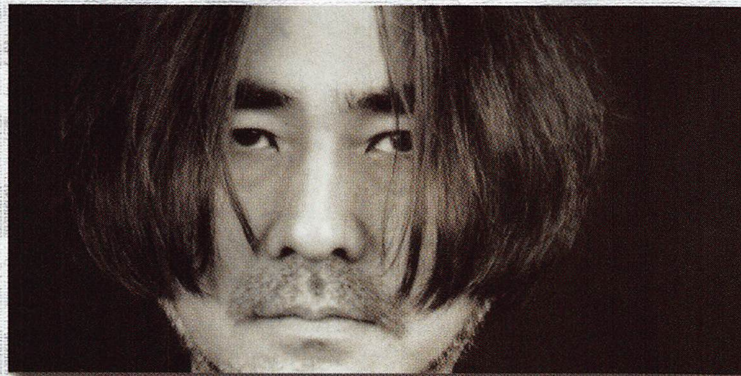




The ***HERO*** multi-media exhibit will be on display at the Angel Orensenz Foundation in New York City, running from October 6th until October 31st. As well, part of the exhibit will be devoted to the 10th Anniversary ***Sandman*** collaboration that Neil Gaiman and Yoshitaka Amano have created together. Neil agreed to revive his Sandman creation for its anniversary only if Amano would be a part of it. Together, they have crafted a wonderful new tale with Neil writing a story based around the Japanese legend ***The Fox, The Monk and the Mikado of all Night's Dreaming*** and Amano doing the artwork for the new book. ***Sandman: The Dream Hunters*** will be available in October. ***- shidoshi***



(above, left) Artwork for Amano's new exhibition "HERO." ©1999 Yoshitaka Amano
(below) Yoshitaka Amano himself.




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the King of Anime '99

FOUR GO IN. ONLY ONE COMES OUT.

This year, the United States will be treated to the release of four major anime titles, each one special and larger than life in their own ways. Thus, AnimeFan proudly presents "the King of Anime '99," our look at the upcoming battle between these four releases in the fight for total supremacy in the US anime market. First is ***Mononoke Hime***—the juggernaut movie from acclaimed artist Hayao Miyazaki which is without question a fan favorite. Then there's ***Tenchi Forever***, the latest and possibly last ***Tenchi Muyo!*** movie which takes the series and its characters in a new and more serious direction. Next up is ***Perfect Blue***, the psychological thriller about the strange and somewhat scary world of the Japanese pop idol. Finally is ***Lain***, the dark horse that combines eerie atmosphere with surreal characters in a way that might just prove to be a winning combination. Which will win in this bloody war of "Best Anime of 1999?" This month, we look at ***Perfect Blue***.









Anime Drive-In

Perfect Blue

AF Best of the Issue!

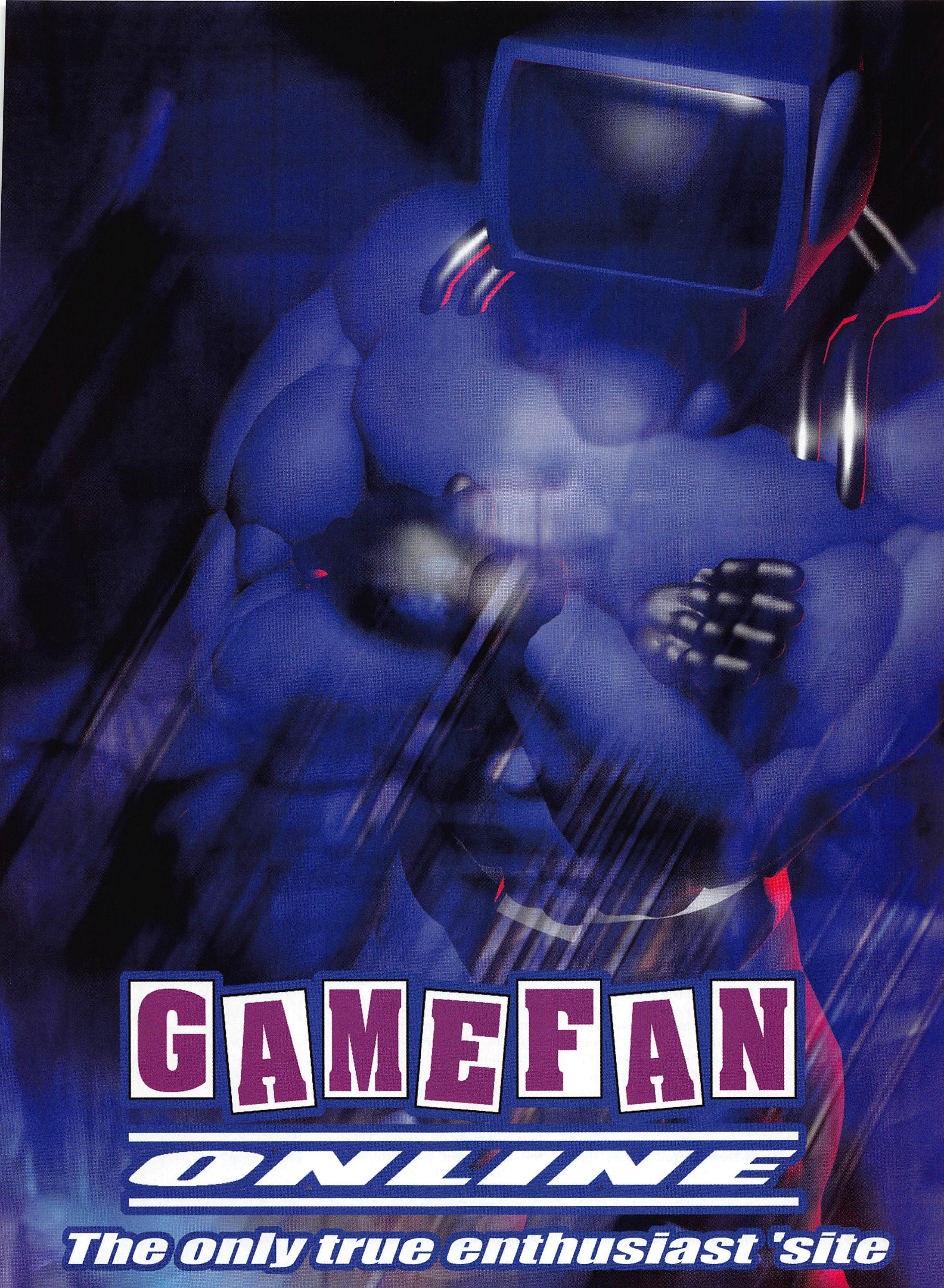
Drama • Movie • Manga Ent. • 16+
80 min • Sub | Dub • Theater | VHS | LD | DVD

A

The world of the pop idol — if you know anything about Japan, you know that pop idols are big business over there. Beneath the catchy songs, stylish outfits, and cute faces of the Japanese girls belting out songs, posing for posters, and filming television ads lies the question "Is the world in which they live as equally happy, bright, and cheerful?" That is the question posed by ***Perfect Blue***, a psychological thriller/horror being released in the United States by Manga Entertainment. Mima Kirigoe is the lead vocalist for Cham, a sweet, innocent Japanese pop trio. Or, at least, Mima USED to be part of Cham. With the idol market becoming a bit unstable, and Cham's records not selling so well, Mima and her manager decide that she needs a change. Mima shocks her fans during a concert when she announces that it is her last, and that she will be trying her hand at being an actress. When you have obsessed fans, however, such a change can cause them great distress. Mima soon finds herself spinning out of control, the line between her acting and real life blurred, and the line between the real Mima and the Mima in the mind of one of her most devoted fans becomes harder to distinguish. Mima no longer strives to make the most of her professional life... she simply tries to keep her life in general from falling apart. Once you see ***Perfect Blue***, there will be no doubt in your mind why I listed it as one of the four biggest anime titles this year. ***PB*** comes off fabulously in its attempt to assault the viewer psychologically — as the show progresses, the feeling of uncertainty and uneasiness really builds inside you (not unlike the recent ***Blair Witch Project***). ***PB***'s cast is a fitting one, each character drawn with a more realistic and down-to-earth flair, yet each unusual enough to make us feel like we are in a world where not everything is as normal as it should be. Direction is superb, with scenes and camera angles done in such a way as to heighten the eerie atmosphere. Even the animation is both beautiful yet strangely unnerving — I'd swear that there are often far more frames of animation going on than normal, which sometimes gives ***PB*** a peculiar feel. Finally, Manga's English dub is low-key, and a bit weak in some areas, but for the most part very strong and respectable (and the songs sound great in English). ***Perfect Blue*** is intended for a more mature audience, but that doesn't fully cover the warning — it's also not for people who don't like their movies to confuse and spook them. Yet, if that's the exact type of show that you crave, then you'll love ***PB***. It is indeed one of the best anime titles to be released in the US this year, and deserves all of the praise it has been given. ***- shidoshi***






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Anime Drive-In

Saber Marionette R

Action • OAV • AnimeVillage • 14+
96 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

B+

Hey look, ANOTHER ***Saber Marionette*** series.. and, would you believe that it's yet again different than its previous incarnation? There's that wonderful trend in anime — if a series is popular, instead of putting creativity into the story, you just re-make it with "alternate" universes as many times as possible to make the most money from it. And yet, sometimes it actually pays off. It worked for me with ***Tenchi in Tokyo*** — a series that I absolutely adore (even if some ***Tenchi*** fans can't stop knocking it) — and it's worked again with ***Saber Marionette R***. Our favorite female androids are back, yet Lime, Cherry, and Bloodberry aren't quite the same as they used to be. They are now younger, more conservative in their design, and watch over the young princess Junior instead of previous hero Otaru. Stepping in as the new antagonist is Star Face, Junior's clone brother, and his gang of merciless Sexadolls (don't look at me, I don't make up the names). This all leads to a show that is VERY different, to a point that many SMJ fans might not like this one. First, it's DARK —very bleak, violent, and heartbreaking. This isn't the comedic ***SM*** story that you're used to, and you may be shocked at how serious this one is at some points. Following that train of thought, the good marionettes are underpowered and horribly simplistic in design (even so, they were still cute and strangely endearing), and the evil marionettes are unbelievably cruel and vicious. And yet, the huge modification in the personality of the characters is something that I unquestionably loved — it really added strength to the story. The art and designs are very different as well, and the entire time I couldn't help but think of ***Megaman Legends*** as I watched. Now, I love stories that don't have happy endings and that are a bit dark, so ***SMR*** really hit it off with me — so much so that I wish this wasn't just a three-episode OAV series. Those who hold ***SMJ*** deep in their hearts, however, may not like this "gothic" sibling. So, while the cute marionettes may make you expect a happy tale here, what you will find is very different — be that good or bad. ***- shidoshi***







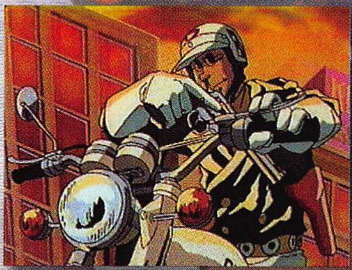


Wild 7

Action • OAV • Urban Vision • 16+
50 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

B-

Criminals running rampant, the government fraught with corruption, innocent citizens afraid to go about their lives — when your city falls into such a state, what can be done about it? One Japanese city takes matters into their own hands and creates the ***Wild 7*** — a special police force made up of ex-criminals who have the guts, not to mention the means, to fight fire with fire. These seven warriors now vow to uphold the law and dish out their own brand of justice... much to the disapproval of both criminals and government officials. As I watched ***Wild 7***, I just couldn't put my finger on what it reminded me of, but then it came to me while I was going back through it to grab the screenshots. ***Wild 7*** reminds me of those wonderfully cheesy late '70s/early '80s action shows (one example would be the ***A-Team***). You've got the ragtag bunch of mismatched crime fighters, the police chief who has to try to control them, and a wide array of over-the-top villains. Sound like your kind of thing? If so, then you'll probably really dig ***Wild 7***. The art style and animation aren't anything that will put fear into the heart of Miyazaki anytime soon, but if you can appreciate them for what they are, they really add a fitting charm to the show. We don't get a good look into the personalities of the entire ***Wild 7*** — instead, the first volume centers around the main hero — but hopefully this won't be the case as the series progresses. If you like your anime serious and thought-provoking, then checking out ***Wild 7*** wouldn't be something that I would recommend. If you do like those crazy, over the top police action shows, then this might be right up your alley. Oh, and do me a favor: If you do watch ***Wild 7***, tell me if you don't think one member of the team sounds like the drunk robot Bender from ***Futurama***. I'm not sure if it's the same voice actor, but I would SWEAR that it is. ***- shidoshi***







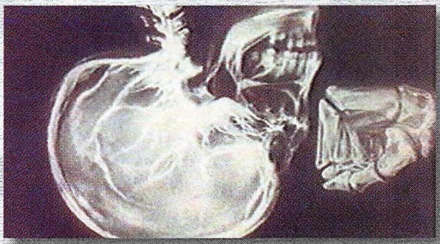


Riki-oh: The Story of Riki

Action • Movie • Tokyo Shock • 17+
90 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

A

In the not so distant future, most government institutions have become privatized (due to the burdening of the national budget), which leads many to horrible corruption. This is the setting for ***Riki-Oh***: after our hero Ricky takes down a drug dealer for killing his girl, he is sentenced to doing hard time in a maximum-security prison. Within the prison walls he must survive challenges from all sides, from the warden of the prison to the ruthless "Gang of Four." I would talk more about the story and plot, but that's not what you'll be watching ***Riki-Oh*** for. Without question, this is a film you simply must see. This is one of the all-time greatest B movies you could ever watch, and is especially fun when enjoyed with a group of friends. It's quite apparent that the makers of this film were in no way concerned with a story. On the contrary, it seems as if they were just looking for a good way of tying a whole lot of violence together in a nice, neat, 90-minute package — and when I say violence, I mean VIOLENCE to the tenth power. Exploding heads, disembowelments, lacerations, detonating bullets, and my favorite of all, lots and lots of dummies — all staples of this movie. When Ricky (who I affectionately call the human twelve gauge) shows up on the scene, you just know someone's going to suffer some serious agony! It seems that in the future, people are held together about as well as a Mr. Potato Head, because whenever Ricky punches one of the countless dregs he comes across, a crack of thunder sounds and body parts go flying. I can still remember the first time I saw the "X-ray punch" scene — which, in my opinion, is hands down the hardest hit I have ever seen a human take in all my years of watching films. After seeing it, I fell on the floor in the fetal position, clutching my stomach in pain, tears running down my face from laughing so hard. The kung fu in this movie is by no means the best you will ever see, but as sick as it is, the violence is the real golden egg of the film. I highly recommend ***Riki-Oh*** to anyone out there with a sick sense of humor or some friends looking for a "good" bad movie to watch. - ***Maurice Williams***







Ninja Resurrection: Hell's Spawn

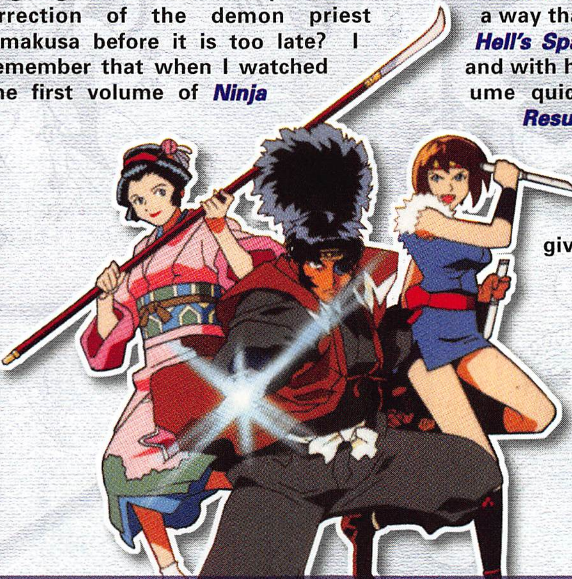
Adventure • OAV • ADV Films • 17+
50 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

B

It's taken a while, but the second title in the ***Ninja Resurrection*** series, ***Hell's Spawn***, is finally here. Continuing from the first volume, things seem to be peaceful and quiet once again. And yet, Jubei is haunted by the images of the suffering souls who were sacrificed at the hands of the evil Amakusa. His dreams are indeed a warning to him, as the powers of the dark have set out to revive their dark lord from the very pits of the abyss. Evil warriors who were thought to be dead now walk the earth again, and when Jubei gets word of this, he must force himself to forget his thoughts of retirement and seek answers to what is going on. Can Jubei stop the resurrection of the demon priest Amakusa before it is too late? I remember that when I watched the first volume of ***Ninja Resurrection***, I came away interested in seeing where the series was going to go. I could see a lot of potential there, and all of the elements of the show seemed to be where they should be — the character designs were interesting, the animation was really good at the times when it counted most (the action scenes), the music was unquestionably beautiful and fitting, and the storyline was serious enough to give it a chance to shine. Thankfully, the second volume continues along these lines, and in fact I think I enjoyed this one even more than the first. Don't get me wrong, I wouldn't compare ***NR*** to something such as the ***Hakkenden***, but it's without question crafted in a way that I'm really getting into it. The end of ***NR: Hell's Spawn*** leaves us with a cliffhanger ending, and with hope, ADV Films will bring us the third volume quicker than they did the second. ***Ninja Resurrection***, in my eyes, is a great series that isn't a timeless classic, but it does what it does well. Even with the bits of graphic violence and maturity, I think this is a series that many might enjoy if given the chance. ***- shidoshi***









El Hazard: The Alternative World Volume 1

Comedy/Action • TV (4 eps.) • Pioneer • 13+
100 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

Anime **B** DVD **B-**







Anime

El Hazard: The Alternative World, the second ***El Hazard*** TV series, picks up where the second OVA series left off. The castaways from planet Earth seem to have set up permanent residence on the world of El Hazard. There's the usual cataclysmic battle between Nanami and the female El Hazardians for Makoto's attentions, and Makoto's experiments are backfiring as always, but otherwise everyone seems to be getting along nicely. That is, until an accident with an inter-dimensional transporter sends everyone to yet another strange, new land. ***EH:TAW*** seems to have gotten the ***Tenchi in Tokyo*** treatment: The over-the-top acting and jokes, the bizarre facial expressions, and the emphasis on awkward romantic interludes are all here. And of course, a cute new heroine has been introduced to steal Makoto's heart away from the original cast. The simplistic art style isn't ***El Hazard***'s best, but it has allowed for some pretty smooth animation so far. (And guess what? It looks just like ***Tenchi in Tokyo***.) I keep getting the feeling that I've seen all this before. But there is still some promise of originality — there's a whole new world to explore now, and new characters to develop (it appears the COOL versions of Ifurita and Rune Venus will even get some screen time). ***El Hazard: The Alternative World*** may yet turn out to be the laughable last gasp of yet another dying series, but at this point I still have hope. ***- Jay McGavren***

DVD

I've heard some people's thoughts on this disc, and they don't seem to go along with my feelings — I was a bit disappointed. The picture looks great, not a hint of compression anywhere, but the colors seemed far too dull and "washed out" to me. A good (yet basic) disc from Pioneer, yet I couldn't shake the feeling that the colors should have been brighter. ***- shidoshi***

Serial Experiments Lain: Knights

Drama • OAV (3 eps.) • Pioneer • 16+
75 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

Anime **A** DVD **A**



As ***Lain*** is part of "the King of Anime '99," this review won't be the be-all-end-all review that you'd expect in the pages of AnimeFan (I just wanted to get some coverage in as soon as I could). It seems that lately the trend in movies and anime is a story about a world that is not what it seems — a world where far more is going on than most people know. That is exactly what we are presented with in ***Lain*** — a world so bizarre and unusual that at NO point during the show do we feel that things are happy and "normal." The world is now connected by the "Wired" — the vast network of power, phone, and communication lines that helps support the beast known as the Internet. Lain has become obsessed with the Wired, and almost without knowing it, her role in said world has become of great relevance to a number of people. Some seek her help, some try to stop her, all the while Lain is forced to deal with the fact that reality is no longer what she used to believe. If ***Perfect Blue*** weren't in this issue to challenge it, ***Lain*** would easily have been best of the issue. This is a deep, intriguing, and sometimes even frightening show about a world slipping into madness, and a heroine that is helping in its descent without even knowing it. Gorgeous animation and artwork, well-crafted scenes and camera angles, rich characters, a stellar soundtrack — this show is a perfect example of how to do anime right. Highly recommended for anyone looking for something beyond the norm.

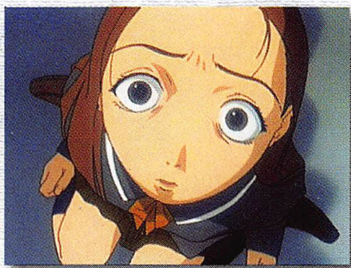
DVD

Lain on DVD is absolutely phenomenal — it is a shining example of what DVD was meant to be. Colors are crisp, lines are sharp, sound is powerful, and the picture quality is so good that there'll be times when you'll honestly wonder if you're looking at the original cel painting instead of your television. If this is anime on DVD, let my eyes never watch anime on VHS again, because there is simply no going back. Purchase ***Lain*** on DVD instead of VHS and experience it the way it was MEANT to be experienced. ***- shidoshi***









AF News Service

Card Captor Captures US

With the success of shows such as ***Sailor Moon***, ***DragonBall Z***, and ***Pokemon***, it was only a matter of time before another anime title was picked up for "Americanization" and release on our shores. The newest acquisition has been made by Nelvana (a Toronto, Canada-based animation studio) by way of Clamp's ***Card Captor Sakura*** (see GameFan Vol. 7 Iss. 4 for a short review). After renaming it to ***Cardcaptor***, Nelvana negotiated for the rights with Japanese giant Kodansha, and now plans to start airing it in North America sometime next year. Obviously, the show won't reach our shores intact, with "questionable" bits being chopped out before it can taint the minds of our children. So far, the only known change is to Sakura's name — she will now be known as "Niki."

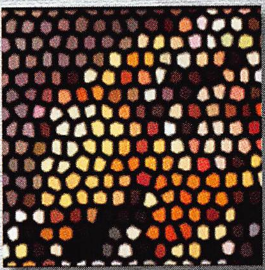


Shidoshi's Fun Corner

Hey boys and girls, how about a little game? A nice, happy, fun, simple little game for you all to enjoy. See those three pictures to the right? Each of those pictures was taken from one of the six pages of this issue's AnimeFan. Your mission now is to figure out where each picture came from. No clues, no hints, and you don't win any groovy little prize if you figure them all out — you're playing strictly for the satisfaction of knowing that you didn't let a simple little puzzle make you look stupid.







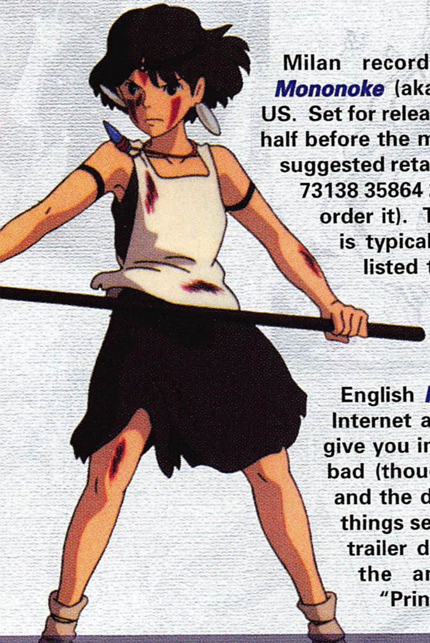
Eva Movies on DVD Still Unsure

Manga Entertainment, who will be releasing the ***Evangelion*** movies in the US (as discussed last issue), has stated that as of yet they still do not have the rights to release the movies on DVD. While they are still in negotiations with Gainax, as of now it would be a safer bet not to expect to see such a release. Gainax is known to be quite demanding when giving rights to other companies to release their titles, and they might not like the idea of Manga releasing the movies on DVD in the US when they have yet to be released on DVD in Japan (a situation which is growing into a rather large problem in trying to get US DVD rights from many Japanese companies).

New Blood at Mixx

Mixx Entertainment (MixxZine, Smile, etc.) recently named John Parker as President and Chief Operating Officer of the company. Parker, who has more than 17 years of experience in the world of entertainment retailing, will be joining current Chief Executive Officer Stuart Levy in the overseeing of both the publication and online divisions of the company. Prior to joining Mixx, Parker spent five years working in Taiwan and Hong Kong as the managing director of KPS Entertainment, where under his guidance the company more than doubled their retail sales. Now, Parker will help Mixx Entertainment in their creation of content and publications for a multicultural audience.

Mononoke Madness



Milan records will be releasing the ***Princess Mononoke*** (aka ***Mononoke Hime***) soundtrack in the US. Set for release on October 12th (a scant week and a half before the movie hits theaters), the CD will have a suggested retail price of $16.98 and is catalog number 73138 35864 2 (to help you or your local record shop order it). The soundtrack for ***Princess Mononoke*** is typical Joe Hisaishi splendor, but the CD is listed to also include two tracks from Sasha Lazar (not quite sure who this is or if these tracks were originally part of the soundtrack). Finally, as I'm finishing up this issue's AnimeFan, the English ***Princess Mononoke*** trailer just hit the Internet a few days ago. From what little they give you in the trailer, the dub doesn't sound too bad (though I think San's voice is a bit rough), and the dub has gotten quite a bit of praise, so things seem good in that area. One piece of the trailer did bother me, however — at the end, the announcer pronounces the title as "Princess Mahnonokey." Ugh.

Transformers Live Again

Just to let all of the ***Transformers: The Movie*** fans (which includes yours truly) out there know, a US re-release of the film onto home video is set to hit next month. While it may be nothing more than a reissuing of the version that was available for sale a while back, there have been whispers that not only might we see a widescreen release of the film, but that a DVD release may actually be possible! While I've heard talk of a DVD version from a number of people, there is as of yet no hard evidence that there will be one, so don't get your hopes up too much. Anyhow, if you're a fan of the movie and you've been trying to get your hands on a copy of it (or just want a new copy to replace your old, worn-out one) then keep your eye out at the local video store sometime around mid-late September. Yeah, I know that pic is small, but I love that cover, and it was the best version of it that I could find.



Hocus Pocus

codes, cheats & strategies



Welcome to the pages of cheats, codes, and hints galore!!! Upon these leaves you will find all the assistance you'll need for the hottest games today. Not satisfied? Need help on another game? No problem! If you need codes or hints on any game, mail GameFan, or e-mail hocuspocus@gamefan.com. Now, travel with thy controller in hand, to a place where cheaters prosper...

Code of the Month!

R/C STUNT COPTER

View the Hilarious End Movie With Dave and the Boys

The guys at Shiny decided to film a little documentary about the making of this little wonder of a PS game. You can find it by beating the game, OR:



At the main menu screen, hit the following buttons:

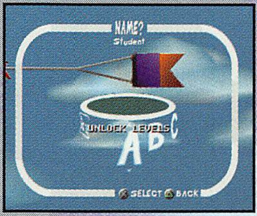
Up, down left, left, X, Square, Circle, Triangle.

If you've entered it correctly, you'll hear a voice say, "Cheaters never prosper!"

R/C Stunt Copter

PlayStation

Hey, you want to unlock all the levels in the game without dealing with that somewhat annoying announcer? If that's the case, enter the following codes at the main menu screen. If you entered the code correctly, you'll hear a voice say, "Cheaters never prosper."



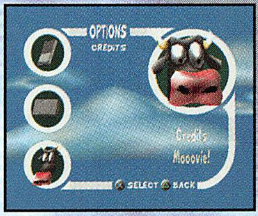
Unlock Training Levels
down, up, left, right, Triangle, X, Square, Circle



Unlock All Levels
down, up, right, left, Traingle, X, Square, Circle



Long Name
up, down, left, right, Triangle, X, Square, Circle



Mega Points
L2, R2, L1, R1, Triangle, Circle, X, Square



End Movie
up, down, left, left, X, Square, Circle, Triangle

Soul Calibur

Dreamcast

Secret Characters, etc.







Secret characters and stages

To unlock the eight secret characters and three extra stages in Arcade Mode, finish the game with each of the normal characters.

Play as Edge Master

To unlock Edge Master, finish the game with every character, including the secret ones. Edge Master will randomly select a weapon every time he fights.

Invisible Characters

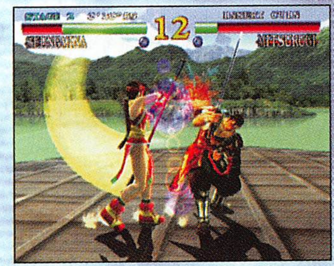
First off, unlock Edge Master in Arcade Mode. Then at the character selection screen, hold R Shift while selecting your character.

Extra Weapons

Unlock Edge Master and then complete every Mission Battle. Then, at the character select screen, hold L Shift while selecting your character.

Play as Inferno

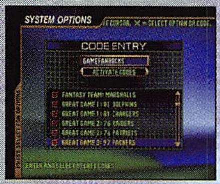
Unlock all the characters, stages, and extra bonuses that are awarded by playing the game in arcade mode and mission mode. Get every picture in the mission mode. When this is accomplished, return to the arcade mode, and select Xianghua and her third outfit by pressing Y + A. If desired, the game may be set to one round and the easy difficulty. Play through and complete the game with her. After the credits complete, a new soul (Inferno) will appear to the right of Edge Master. He randomly switches weapons like Edge Master, but has some moves of his own that can be done with any weapon.







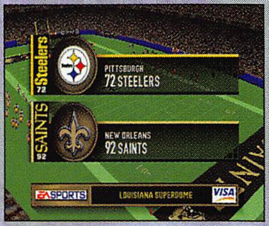
Madden Football 2000

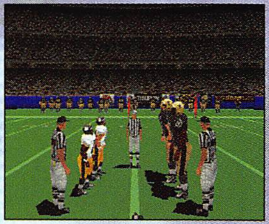




Select "Cheats" at the System Options Menu, and enter the following codes for the appropriate effects:

FIRSTIS20....................20 yard first downs
EXPRESSBALL.................No interceptions
REFISBLIND.........................Less penalties
PAINFUL................................More injuries
MINIME................Big versus small players
WILDWEST..................Dodge City stadium
ITSINTHEGAME............EA Sports stadium
COWBOYS............Marshalls fantasy team
MOJOBABY...........................All '60s team
LOVEBEADS..........................All '70s team
DONTGOFOR2.............1972 Steelers team
GETMEADOCTOR...........1972 Raiders team
GAMMALIGHT..............1976 Raiders team
HACKCHEESE...............1976 Patriots team
15MOREMIN................1981 Dolphins team
BUILDMONKEYS........1981 Chargers team
CHICKIN......................1985 Dolphins team
DOORKNOB.....................1985 Bears team
KAMEHAMEHA............1986 Browns team
BLUESCREEN...............1986 Broncos team
CALLMESALLY.................1988 49ers team
PTMOMINFOGET..........1988 Bengals team
PROFSMOOTH...............1990 Giants team
SPOON...................................1990 Bills team
STEAMPUNK...............1995 Steelers team
PREDATORS......................1995 Colts team
TUNDRA........................1997 Packers team
EARTHPEOPLE.............1997 Broncos team





NFL Blitz 2000

So this game ain't crazy enough for you? Well, enter the following codes at the Versus Screen for the following effects. All codes are entered with a three button combination and a direction on the control stick.

0 = NFL Symbol
1 = Midway Logo
2 = Helmet
3 = 10 Yard Sign
4 = Cheerleader
5 = NFL Trophy

Infinite Turbo
5 – 1 – 4 up

Power-up offense
3 – 1 – 2 up

Power-up defense
4 – 2 –1 up

Power-up teammates
2 – 3 – 3 up

Power-up blockers
3 – 1 – 2 left

Super blitzing
0 – 4 – 5 up

Show field goal %
0 – 0 – 1 down

Big football
0 – 5 – 0 right

Fast passes
2 – 5 – 0 left

No interceptions
3 – 4 – 4 up

No Heads
3 – 2 – 1 left

Big Head
2 – 0 – 0 right

No Interceptions
3 – 4 – 4 up

Tournament Mode
1 – 1 – 1 down

Super Field Goals
1 – 2 – 3 left

2 Player Hyper Blitz
5 – 5 – 5 up

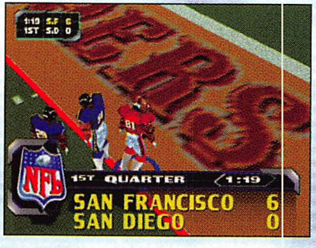
Weather: clear
2 – 1 – 1 left

Weather: snow
5 – 2 – 5 down

Weather: rain
5 – 5 – 5 right

Night game
0 – 2 – 2 right







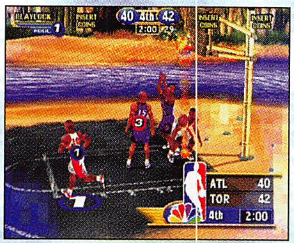


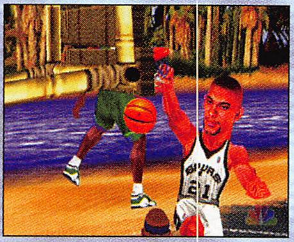
NBA Showtime: The NBA on NBC

Court Selection

To select different courts, right after you select both your team members, press the following commands. You should hear a confirmation sound if done correctly.

Home Team Court.................Turbo + up
Away Team Court............Turbo + down
Street Court..........................Turbo + left
Island Court.......................Turbo + right
Midway Court............Shoot + Pass + up
NBC Court...........Shoot + Pass + down





Versus Screen Codes

All codes are entered with a three button combination and a direction on the D-pad.

0 = Midway logo
1 = Basketball
2 = Letter A
3 = Letter B
4 = Letter C
5 = Letter N

Tournament Mode (2 Player Game)
1 – 1 – 1 down

Show Shot Percentage
0 – 0 – 1 down

Show Hotspot
1 – 0 – 0 down

No Hotspots (2 Player)
2 – 0 – 1 up

No Replays 2 – 2 – 1 left

No Tip Off (2 Player)
4 – 4 – 4 up

ABA Ball 2 – 3 – 2 right

Big Head 2 – 0 – 0 right

Team Uniform
4 – 0 – 0 right

Midway Uniform
4 – 0 – 1 right

GameShark Codes

Choro Q Wonderful! PS Import

All Parts
301F7DB8 00FF
801F7DBC 03FF
301F7DC0 000F
301F7DC4 000F
301F7DC8 003F
301F7DCC 001F

All Items
801F7DD0 0FFF

Everybody's Golf 2 PS Import

All Characters
D0046E70 0007
80046E70 1FFF

All Courses
80046E82 0005

All Stages
80047854 00FF

Guitar Freaks PS Import

Open Secret Mode
300FB454 0001

All Songs in the "Free" Mode
800FB45C FFFF
800FB45E FFFF

Remote Control Dandy PS Import

Robot Infinite Energy
E009511A 0002
80199F58 0320
80199F5C 0320

Robot Infinite Power
E009511A 0002
80199F68 0400

Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver - PlayStation

Infinite Health in Spirit World
800D5674 86A0
800D5676 0001

Infinite Health in Material World
800D5674 A120
800D5676 0007

Have All Glyph Abilities
800CFDBE 03FF
800D5682 03FF

Infinite Glyph Power
800D5688 0063
800D568A 0063

Max Stamina Level
800D5670 0004

Plane Shift Anywhere
800A5A7E 2400
800B00C4 FFD0
800B00C6 1000

Chocobo Racing PlayStation

Enable All Movies
801E9298 FFFF

Have All Crowns & Classes
801E9290 FFFF
801E9292 FFFF

Enable All Characters & Tracks
801E929C FFFF
300AF04F 0008

WWF Attitude Nintendo 64

Infinite Attribute Points
80069950 0000

Player 1 Infinite Energy
D0038C04 1021
800EC2A4 0000
D0038C04 1021
800EC2A6 0000

Player 2 Infinite Energy
D0038C04 1021
800EE910 0000
D0038C04 1021
800EE912 0000

Player 3 Infinite Energy
D0038C04 1021
800F0708 0000
D0038C04 1021
800F070A 0000

Player 4 Infinite Energy
D0038C04 1021
800F2500 0000
D0038C04 1021
800F2502 0000

Enable Everything
800CB338 09FF
800CB33A F000
800CB33C AF5C
800CB33E FFFF

Monster Rancher 2 PlayStation

Max Funds
80098FBC E0FF
80098FBE 05F5

Max Purse
80098FC8 E0FF
80098FCA 05F5

Breeder Expert Grade
30098FC0 000A

Max Life
80097A20 03E7

Max Power
80097A22 03E7

Max Intelligence
80097A2A 03E7

Max Skill
80097A26 03E7

Max Speed
80097A28 03E7

Max Defense
80097A24 03E7

L2+SEL Opponent Guts Drain
D00938AE 0101
801FFC7C 0000

R2+Sel Opponent Life Drain
D00938AE 0102
801FFC5C 0000

Fire Pro G Wrestling PS Import

Infinite Stamina
800AFF14 FFFF
800AFF16 FFFF

Infinite Endurance
800AFF18 FFFF
800AFF1A FFFF

All Techniques in Fighting Road Mode
D0193A74 4445
30193A96 0002

Tiny Tank PlayStation

Infinite Health
800ACDBE 2400

Infinite Teeny Tanks
800A80AE 2400

Infinite Energy
800A3756 2400

Infinite Lives
800A3252 2400

Duke Nukem Zero Hour – N64

Infinite Ammo Pistol
8111A6AA 0063
8111A6B0 0000

Infinite Ammo Shotgun
8111A6D2 0063
8111A6D8 0000

Infinite Ammo Machine Gun
8111A6FA 0063
8111A700 0000

Infinite Ammo Grenade Launcher
8111A722 0063
8111A728 0000

Infinite Ammo Pipe Bomb
8111A74A 0063
8111A750 0000

GAMESHARK
INTERACT

Infinite Ammo Dynamite
8111A772 0063
8111A778 0000

Infinite Ammo Machine Shotgun
8111A7C2 0063
8111A7C8 0000

Infinite Ammo Plasma Gun
8111A7EA 0063
8111A7F0 0000

Infinite Ammo Lasergun
8111A812 0063
8111A818 0000

Shadowman Nintendo 64

Infinite Health
81075B18 0000
81075B1A 2710

Max Shadow Charge Level
81075B20 0000
81075B22 2710

Max Shadow Charge
81075B24 0000
81075B26 2710

Infinite Voodoo
81075B28 0000
81075B2A 2710

Infinite MP-909
81075B2E 0063

Infinite Violator
81075B32 03E7

Infinite Bullets
81075B3A 03E7

Macross VF-X2 PS Import

Infinite Guns
80083288 270F

Infinite Shields
800858A0 270F

To Make This Game Good
88888888 4444

Home Uniform 4 – 1 – 0 right

Away Uniform 4 – 2 – 0 right

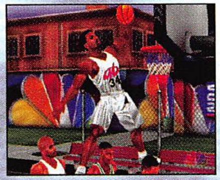
Alternate Uniform 4 – 3 – 0 right



The following can only be used in outdoor courts:

Fog On 1 – 2 – 3 up

Thick Fog On 1 – 2 – 3 down



Night Fog On 1 – 2 – 3 left

Swamp Fog On 1 – 2 – 3 right

Snow 1 – 2 – 1 left



Blizzard 1 – 3 – 1 left

Rainy Days 1 – 4 – 1 left

Soul Calibur

Legend:
G = Guard Button
A = Horizontal Attack Button
B = Vertical Attack Button
K = Kick Button
(while standing) = crouch, then as you rise, perform the command



Voldo

Throws

Spinning Umbrella (front side)
G + A

Centipede Nightmare (front side)
G + B

Bloody Drill (front side)
G + K

Life Sucker (front side)
down, diag. down/forward, forward + G + A

Blind Ownership (front side)
down, diag. down/back, back + G + B

Fool's Inquest (left side)
G + A or G + B

Bush Wacker (right side)
G + A or G + B

Sadistic Spider (back side)
G + A or G + B

Attacks

Scissor Claw
A,A

Dark Shredder
A, B, A

Side Claw Kick
A, K

Jolly Ripper
forward + A

Elegant Claw
tap forward, hold forward + A

Blind Blade
diag. down/forward + A

Rat Chase
down + A, K

Rat Cheeze
down + A, A, A, K

Mouse Cutter
diag. down/back + A

Blind Spin
back +A, A

Lunatic Doll
tap back, hold back + A

Suspended Gears
G + up (as you land) A

Brain Robber
up + A

Scorpion Claw
(while standing) A

Grave Digger
B, A

Stampede Shredder
B, B

Full Stampede Shredder
(back of target) B, B, B

Blade Nail
forward + B

Demon Elbow
tap forward, hold forward + B

Guillotine Scissors
diag. down/forward + B, B

Power Slave
down + B, B

Asylum Dance
diag. down/back + B, K, K

Hell Digger
back + B

Hell Chop 2 Blind Claw
back + B, A

Suspended Pendulum
G + up (land) B

Floral Callus
up + B

Bat Taste
(while standing) B, B

Rat Drill
hold down diag, down/forward + B

Blind Dive
tap forward, hold forward + K

Mute Mid Kick
diag. down/forward + K

Rat Kick
down + K

Scorpion Tail
diag. down/back + K

Lunatic Flip
tap back, hold back K

Rat Slaughter Kick
Guard + up (while landing), k

Rat Drop Kick
up + K

Lunatic Spin
(while standing) k

Insane Flip
tap forward, hold forward + G + A + B

Insane Freak
tap forward, hold forward + G + A+ B, K

Praying Mantis
A + B

Katar Gore
forward + A + B

Gate Opener
tap forward, hold forward + A + B

Gate Pryer
tap forward, hold forward + A + B , K

Evil Bow
down + A + B

Gullotine Scissors Alternate
back + A + B

Blind Dive
hold down, diag down/forward + A + B

Death Rose
A + K

Web Weaver
back + A + K

Super Freak
back + K

Super Freak Inner
down + B + K

Super Freak Outer
up + B + K

Rat Bounce
hold down, B + K



Ivy

Throws

Primal Dominance (front side)
G +A

Dominion Throw (front side)
G +B

Summon Suffering (front side)
diag. down/forward, diag. up/back, forward, down, diag. down/forward + A +B

Guiding Huntress (left side)
G + A or G + B

Sunset Cradle (right side)
G + A or G + B

Sweet Dominance (back side)
G + A or G + B

Attacks

Biting Raven
A

Raven's Beak
A, A

Raven Butt
forward + A

Raven's Egg
tap forward , hold forward + A

Cross Madness
diag. down/forward + A

Cursed Mark
down + A

Menace Slice
back + A

Singing Sparrow
G+ up (as you land) A

Wing Blade
up + A

Menace
(while standing) A

Immortal Gale
B

Immortal Wind
B, B

Squire's Bow
B, forward + hold B

Ivy Thrust
forward + B

Ivy Lash
forward + hold B

Ivy Lick
forward +hold B, up + K

Biting Ivy
forward + B, neutral, down or up

Serpent's Breath
tap forward, hold forward + B

Cursed Heavens
diag. down/forward + B

Curse Brand
down + B

Poison Ivy
diag. down/back + B

Ivy Bite
back + B

Spiral Punishment
back + B, A, B

Darkside
back, hold back + B

Venom Lash
down, diag. down/back , back + B

Fear's Lash
G+ up, b

Falling Sparrow
G + up (as you land) B

Fear's Flame
up + B

Shameless
(while standing) B

Ivy Masquerade
hold down, diag. down/forward + B

Pride
hold down, diag. down/back + B

Raven Knee
forward + K

Mind Shatter
tap forward, hold forward + K

Foul Kick
diag. down/forward + K

Charmer Silhouette
down + K

Evil Sparrow
diag. down/forward + K

Raven Catcher
back + K

Diving Raven
tap back, hold back + K

Night Sparrow
G + up (as you land) K

Rambler Sobat
up + K

Rising Cross
(while standing) K

Nail Cross
hold down, diag. down/forward + K

Freeze Gale
tap forward + A + B

Insanity Light
tap forward, hold forward + A + B

Eye of Madness
diag. down/forward + A + B

Dominance
down + A + B

Razor's Bite
diag. down/forward + A + B

Crucifxion
tap back, hold back + A + B

God Whisper
diag. up/forward + A + B, A

Demented Loop
(while standing) A + B, A

Masquerade of Madness
hold down, diag. down/forward + A + B

Ancient Wheel
diag. down/forward + A + K

Royal Huntress
down + A + K

Serpent's venom
tap forward, down ,diag. down/forward + A + K

Embrace of Lust
tap forward + B + K

Fear's Void Far
diag. down/forward + B + K

Fear's Void
down + B+ K

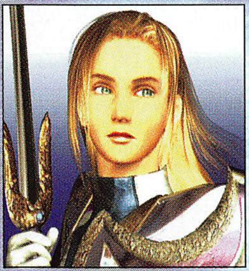
Fear's Void Close
diag. down/back + B + K

Heel Explosion
back + B + K

Exile
tap back, hold back + B + K

Asylum
(while standing) B + K

Punishment Change
tap down, diag. down/back, back or down, diag. down/forward, forward



Sophitia

Throws

Widow Maker (front side)
G + A

Holy Craker (front side)
G + B

Heaven's Writing (front side)
tap forward, hold forward + G + A

Round Knocker (left side)
G + A or G + B

Broken Promise (rght side)
G + A or G + B

Bottoms Up (back side)
G + A or G + B

Attacks

Second Strike
A, A

Slide Tornado
A, K

Slide Flow
Forward + A, B

Silent Cross
Tap forward, hold forward + A

Angel Punisher
Diag. down/forward + A

Under Slide Blade
Down + A

Iron Butterfly
Diag. down/back + A, A

Cutlass Europa
Back + A, A, A

Cutlass Titan
Back + A, B

Reverse Mirage
Tap back, hold back + A

Angel Satellite
Down, diag. down/forward, forward + A

Angel Satellite Beta
Down, diag. down/forward, forward, down, neutral + A, A

Goddess Salute
(while standing) A

Under Stream
G + up (as you land) A

Air Side Spin
Up + A

Nasty Impale
B, A, B, B, B

Twin Flow
B, B,

Angel's Flow
B, K

Quick Strike
Forward + B

Olympus Cannon
Tap forward, hold forward + B

Grace Heaven
Diag. down/forward + B

Guardian Strike
Down + B, B

Under Splash
Diag. down/back + B

Sword Shower
Back + B

Guardian Upper
Tap back, hold back + B

Heaven's Gate
Tap back, hold back + B, A

Angel's Strike
Down, diag. down/forward, forward + B

Heaven's Judgement
Down, diag. down/forward, forward + B, A, A, A, K

Jet Stream Rush Beta
Up, neutral, B, A, B

Flare Upper
G + up (as you land) B

Diving Splash
Up + B

Exile
(while standing) B

Grace Sault
K, B

Kick Duo
K, K

Plasma Blade
Tap forward, hold forward + K

Angel Side Kick
Diag. down forward + K

Spring Under Kick
Down + K

Tornado Low Kick
Diag. down/back + K

Gaea Kick
Tap back, hold back + K

Angel's Spriing
Down, diag. down/forward, forward + K

Holy Crest Kick
Up, neutral, K

Holy Crest Kick
G, up + K

Moon Mirage Kick
G + up (as you land) K

Angel's Spiral Alpha
Diag. up/forward + K, A, B

Angel Fall
Diag. up/forward + K, B

Angel's Sault
Diag. up/forward + K, K

Angel's Spiral
Daig. Down/forward + A+ B

Gaea Quake
Up + A+ B

Mirage Satellite
(while standing) A + B

Tornado High Kick
A + K

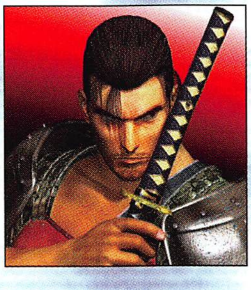
Tornado Feint
A+ K, K

Temperance Strike
B + K, B

Jet Stream Rush
Tap forward, hold forward + B +K, A, B

Olympus Shower
Tap back, hold back + B + K

Tower Upper
(while standing) + B+ K



Mitsurugi

Throws

Sea of Madness (front side)
G + A

Pulling Ivy (front side)
G + B

Gate of Hell (left side)
G + A or G + B

8th Bill of Punishment (right side)
G + A or G + B

Divine Gift (back side)
G + A or G + B

Attacks

Samurai Slashes
A, A

Calm Breeze
Forward + A

Sudden Gale
Tap forward, hold forward + A

Splitting gold
Diag. down/forward + A

Knee Slice
Down + A

Shin Slicer
Diag. down/back + A

Drawn Breath
Back + A

Vacuum
Tap back, hold back + A

Stump Banish
G + up (as you land) A

Stump Cross
Up + A

Silent Step Slash
Down, diag. down/forward, forward + A

Forced Prayer
B, B

Mountain Divide
B, A

Wind Hole
Forward + B

Wind Hole Lower
Forward + B, down

Wind Hole Upper
Forward + B, up

Heaven Dance
Tap forward, hold forward + B, B

Heaven Cannon
Diag. down/forward + B

Rust
Down + B

Cloud Divide
Diag. down/back + B

Wind Hole Vortex
Tap back + B

Forced God
Tap back, hold back + B, B

Samurai Thrust
Down, down/forward, forward + B, B

Dragon Fly Slash
G + up (as you land) B

Stalk Cutter
Tap up + B

Pocket Pick
(while standing) B

Time Hole
Hold down, tap down/forward + B

Cloud Divide 2 Cold Stitch
Hold down, tap down/back + B, B

Obedience
K, B

Wheel Kick
Tap forward + K

Front Kick
Tap diag. down/forward + K

Rising Knee
Tap forward, hold forward + K

Stalk Shaver
Tap down + K, B

Hem Stitch
Tap diag. down/back + K

Bullet Cutter
Tap back + K, B

Front Kick
Tap down, diag. down/forward, forward + K

Dive Kick
G + up, K

Outer Snap
G + up (as you land) K

Shadow Kick
Tap up + K

Stell Slicer
A + B

Phoenix Tail
Tap forward, hold forward + A + B

Cold Stitch
Tap down + A +B

Wheel Slash
Tap up + A + B

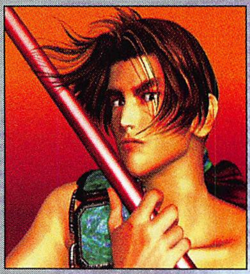
Shin Banish
Hold down, diag. down/forward + A + B

Dividing Thrust
A + K

Autumn requiem
Tap back + K

Driving Stitch
Diag. down/forward + B + K

Parting thrust
Tap back + B + K



Kilik

Throws

Heaven Monument (front side)
G + A

Light Breeze (front side)
G + B

Cutting Sadness (left side)
G + A or G + B

Summer Gale (right side)
G + A or G + B

Phoenix Pounce (back side)
G + A or G + B

Attacks

Bo Rush Combo
A, A, B

Bo Rush Feint
A, A, tap up or down

Twin Phoenix
A, A, B

Phoenix Feint
A, B

Raging Phoenix
Tap forward + A, A, A

Cross Bo
Tap forward, hold forward + A

Advancing Ling Su
Diag. down/forward + A, A

Inner Peace
Down + A

Lower Bo Slice
Diag. down/back + A

Escaping Bo
Back + A

Cross Tide
Tap back, hold back + A, A

Quick Wave Divide
G + u (as you land) A

Sky Divide
Tap up + A

Ling Sheng Slash
(while standing) A

Rushing Waterfall
B, B

Sheng Mirage Kick
B, K

Bo Thrust
Tap forward + B

Lower Bo Feint
Tap forward + B, down

Heavy Bo
Tap forward, hold forward + B

Twin Bo Upper
Tap diag. down/back + B, B

Waterfall
Tap down + B

Advancing Bo
Tap diag. down/back + B

Phoenix Thrust
Tap back + B

Stream Thrust
Tap back, hold back + B

Midnight Sun
G + up, B

Raven Slaughter
G + up (as you land) B

Yang Falling
Tap up + B

Yin and Yang
Tap down, diag. down/back, back + B

Ling Sheng Slash
(while standing) B

River Thrust
Hold down, down back + B

Sheng Front Kick
K

Sheng Illusion Kick
K, B

Sheng Lunge Kick
Tap forward + K

Sheng Lunge Kick Combo
Tap forward + K, B

Rising Phoenix
Tap forward, hold forward + K, K, B

Sheng Side Kick
Tap diag. down/forward + K

Sheng Su Low Kick
Tap down +K

Ling Sheng Su Sweep
Tap diag. down/ back + K

Biting Kick
Tap back + K

Biting Heaven
Tap back + K, B

Cloud Kick
Tap back, hold back + K

Ling Sheng Su Sweep
G + up (as you land) K

Lian Hua Jump Kick
Tap up + K

Phoenix Hop Kick
(while standing) K + B

Retreating Thrust
G + K

Phoenix Roar
A + B

Biting Phoenix
Tap forward + A+ B

Phoenix Flare
Tap back + A + B

(PF) to Raven Slaughter
Tap back + A + B, B, B

Tricky Bo
Tap diag. down/forward + A+ B

Lower Bo Smack Down
Tap down + A + B

Dirty Bo
Tap diag. down/back + A+ B

Pounding Stones
Hold down A + B

Phoenix Cross
A + K

Bo Smack Down
Tap forward + A+ K

Phoenix Claw
Tap diag. down/forward + A + K

Wave Divide
Tap down + A + K

Phoenix Tail
Diag. down/back + A + K

Upper Bo Feint
B + K

Yin Rising
Tap forward + B + K

Playful Phoenix
Tap diag. down/back + B + K

Lower Bo Feint
Tap back + B+ K



Xianghua

Throws

Yuen Chuei Shaur (front)
G + A

Long Ling Sheang (front)
G + B

Tien E Sheang (left)
G + A or G + B

Yng Dyi Yann (right)
G + A or G + B

Yuh Luen Shaur (back)
G + A or G + B

Attacks

Beautiful Rhythm
A, A, B

Tzao Lan Hua Rhythm
A, A, tap back + B, B

False Tazo Lan Hua Rhythm
A, A, tap back + B, B, B

False Rhythm
A, A, tap up or down

Lian Hua Twist-Left
A, B

Feng Yun Feint
A, K, B

Double Feng Yun
A, K, K

Cross Lian Hua
Tap forward + A

Striking Lian Hua
Tap forward, hold forward + A

Shui Shian Strike
Tap diag. down/forward +A

Rhythm Halt
Tap down + A

Chai Hua
Tap diag. down/back + A

Stroming Lian Hua
Tap back + A

Lan Hua Slice
Tap back, hold back + A

Lan Hua
Tap back, hold back + A

Falling Chai Hua
G + u (as you land) A

Yann Slice
Tap up + A

Muu Jiann Rhythm
(while standing) A, A

Elegant Rhythm
B, B

Lian Hua Twist-Right
B, A

Mei Hua Circle
B, K

Advancing Rhythm
Tap forward + B, A

Deadly Rhythm
Tap forward + B, B

Playful Rhythm
Tap forward, hold forward + B, B

Lian Hua Upper
Tap diag. down/forward + B

Rhythm Break
Tap down + B

Shan Ji
Tap diag. down/ back + B, A

Tzao Lan Hua
Tap back + B, B

Tzao Lan Hua Feint
Tap back + B, B, B

Vengeful Lian Hua
Tap back, hold back + B

Shiang Ryh Kwei
G + up (as you land) B

Yann Slash
Tap up + B

Shiang Ryh Kwei
(while standing) B

Shiang Ryh Kwei Feint
(while standing) B, A

Mei Guei Hua
Hold down, diag. down/forward + B

Mei Guei Hua Feint
Hold down, diag. down/forward + B, B

Yuen Kick
K

Outer Heh Kick
K, B, B

Heh Kick
Tap forward + K

Woan Shyong Swing
Tap forward, hold forward + K

Sheau Shan Kick
Diag. down/forward + K

Woan Shyong Nibble
Tap down + K

Circle Breaker (CB)
Diag. down/back + K

(CB) Feint
diag. down/back + K, A, B, B

(CB) Fient to Feng Yun
diag. down/back + K, A, A, K

Shan Kick
Tap back + K

Ta
Tap back, hold back + K

Lian Hua Sweep
G + up (as you land) K

Inner Heh Kick
Tap up + K

Rising Shui Shian
(while standing) K

Muu Jiann
A + B

Muu Jiann Advance
Tap forward + A + B

Great Wall
Tap forward, hold forward A+ B

Lian Hua Cannon
Tap diag. down/forward + A + B

Yann Divide
Tap down + A + B

Muu Jiann Retreat
Back + A + B

Mei Hua Divide
(while standing) A+ B, B

Mei Hua Carve
(while standing) A+ B, tap down + B

Hou Lee
A + K

Lower Great Wall
Tap back + K

Lian Hua Sweep
Tap down + A + K, K

Advancing Bea Her Hua
Tap forward, hold forward + B + K

Lower Great Wall
Tap diag. down/forward + B + K

Quake Step
Tap down + B + K

Hwu Dye
Tap diag. down/back + B + K

Muu Ling
Tap back + B + K

Retreating Bea Her Hua
Tap back, hold back + B + K



Maxi

Throws

Falling Heaven Dragon (front side)
G + A

Lynching (front side)
G + B

Dragon Destroyer (left side)
G +A or G + B

Leaving the Dragon Nest (right side)
G +A or G + B

Parting the Waves (back side)
G +A or G + B

Attacks

Twin Snakes
A, A

Stonewall
A, K

Stone Kick
A, K, hold back

Lunging Snake
Tap forward + A

Striking Snake
Tap forward, hold forward + A

Lotus
Tap diag. down/forward + A

Tongue
Tap down + A

Snake Scythe
Diag. down/back + A

Nunchaku Slap
Tap back + A

Nunchaku Slap 2 Steel Dragon
Tap back + A, B

NSlap 2 Branding Nunchaku
Tap back +A, B, hold back

Serpent's Bane
Tap back +A , B, A, A, B

Wave Slice
Tap back, hold back + A

Dandy Surprise
Tap down, diag. down/forward, forward + A

Snake Scythe 2 Pure Soul
G + up (as you land) A

Snake Wing
Tap up + A

Nunchaku Cross
(while standing) A

Rope Dancer
Hold down, tap diag. down/.forward + A, A, A

Snake Bite
B

Steel Dragon
Tap forward + B

Branding Nanchaku
Tap forward + B, hold back

Serpent's Desire
Tap forward, B, A, A, B

Return of Fear
Tap forward, hold forward + B

Bitting Upper
Tap diag. down/forward + B

Falling Fang
Tap down + B

Inner Bitting Upper
Tap diag. down/back + B

Snake Kiss
Tap back + B

Venom Fang
G + up , B

Nunchaku Lick
G + up (as you land) B

Dragon's Judgement
Tap up + B

Rolling Bitting Upper
(while standing) B

Falling Dragon
K, B, A

Dragon Pounce
K, B, K

Left Roundhouse
Tap forward + K

Dragon Roar
Tap forward, hold forward + K

Snap Kick
Tap diag. down/forward + K

Illusion Kick
Tap down + K, B

Illusion Low Kicks
Tap down + K, K

Quick Slice
Tap diag. down back + K

Right Roundhouse
Tap back + K

Rolling sobat
Tap back, hold back + K

Stone Kick
G + up (as you land) K

Dive Kick
Tap up + K

Hurricane
Tap down, diag. down/forward, forward + K

Dragon Scream
(while standing) K, K

Serpent's Pleasure
A + B

Rage of Pleasure
Tap back + A + B

Dragon's Brand
(while standing) A + B

Side Winder
A + K

Gullotine Dance
Diag. down/forward + A + K

Fury
B+ K, B, B, B, A

Dragon Cannon
Tap forward, hold forward + A + K

Nunchaku Lick
Tap diag. down/forward + B + K

Tiger Slaughter
Tap down + B + K, B

Twisted Loop
Tap back + B + K



Nightmare

Throws

Hilt Impact (front side)
G + A

Nightmare Slasher (front side)
G + B

Flap Jack (front side)
Hold down, G+ A or G + B

Calamity Fall (left side)
G+ A or G + B

Unholy Terror (right side)
G+ A or G + B

Witch Hunt (back side)
G+ A or G + B

Attacks

Slash
A

Slash Cross
A, A, B

Double Grounder
A, tap down + A, A, A

Quick Spin Slash
Tap forward + A

Right Slasher
Tap forward, hold forward + A

Armet Crusher
Tap diag. down/forward + A

Leg Slash
Tap down + A

Shadow Slicer
Tap diag. down/back + A

Back Spin Slash
Tap back + A, A

Diving Leg Slash
G + up (as you land) A

Jumping Back Spin Slash
Tap up + A

Maelstrom
(while standing) A, A

Sword Buster
B

Gun Turret Buster
B, tap forward

Rampart Buster
B, tap back

Buster Feint to Night Behind Stance
B, neutral, tap back

Mail Splitter
B, B

Buster Grounder
B, tap down + A

Piercing Strike
Tap forward + B

Lock Splitter
Tap forward, hold, forward + B

Cannonball Splitter
Tap forward, hold, forward + B, A

Sky Splitter
Tap diag. down/forward + B

Shadow Buster
Tap down + B

Drilling Thrust
Tap diag. down/back + B

Double Headbutt
Tap forward + B, B

Fatal Dive
Tap back, hold back + B, B

Earth Divide
Tap down, diag. down/forward, forward + B

Diving Cannonball Lifter
G + up (as you land) B

Fatal Buster
Tap up + B

Cannonball Lifter
(while standing) B

Splitter Buster
Hold down, B

Jade Crusher
Tap forward + K

Shoulder Rust
Tap forward, hold forward + K

Accel Headbutt
Tap diag. down/forward + K, K, B

Grind Low Kick
Tap down + K

Darkside Kick
Tap back + K

Stomping
Tap down, diag. down/forward, forward + K, K, K, K, K, K

Diving Accel Kick
G + up (as you land) K

rolling Sobat
tap up + K

Rising Night Kicks
(while standing) K

Flying Edge
Tap forward, hold forward + A + B

Dark Soul Impact
Tap diag. down/forward + A + B

Spin Kick Combo
A + K, K

Spin Kick to Slash
A + K, A

Spin Kick to Slash Cross
A + K, A, A, B

Spin Kick to Double Grounder
A + K, A, tap down + A, A

Drop Kick
Tap forward, hold forward + B + K



Taki

Throws

Return of the Sun (front side)
G + A
Departure in Fire (front side)
G + B

Crossing the Cliff (front side)
Tap forward, hold forward + G + B

Cellar Drop (left side)
G+ A or G + B

Jute Burial (right side)
G+ A or G + B

Dropping the Bottle (back side)
G+ A or G + B

Attacks

Shadow Shrine
A, tap forward

Shadow Ripper
A, A, B

Silent Shadow
A, A, tap forward + B

Darkness Illusion
A, B, B

Shadow rush
A, B, K

Shadow Cannon
A, B, tap back + B + K

False Shadow
Tap forward + A

Possessed Misery
Tap forward, hold forward + A, hold diag. down/back

Buring Misery
Tap forward, hold forward + A, B, B, B,

Shadow Split
Tap diag. down/forward + A

Earth Scroll
Tap down + A, K

Reaping Hook
Tap diag. down/ back + A

Curse
Tap back + A

Bamboo Cutter
Tap back, hold back + A

Hanging Phantom
G + up (as you land) A

Air Phantom
Tap up +A

Shadow Claw
(while standing) A, A, A

Shadow to Possession
B, A, hold diag. down/back

Shadow Scroll
B, A, A

Shadow Banishment
B, A, K

Heavy Shadow
B, A, tap forward + K

Shadow to Stalker
B, A, A + B

Lightning Strike
B, B, B

Blood Scroll
B, K, A

Silence
Tap forward + B

Assassin's Strike
Tap forward, hold forward + B

Assassin's Feather
Tap diag. down/forward + B

Mekki-maru's Darkness
Tap down + B, A

Free Shadow
Tap diag. down/back + B15

Darkness to Possession
Tap back + B

Seal
Tap back, hold back + B

Darkness Banishment
G + up (as you land) B, B

Air Calm
Tap up + B

Seal of the Fire Dragon
Tap back, diag. down/back, down, diag. down/forward, forward + B

Darkness Banishment
(while standing) B, B

Banishment to Stalker
(while standing) B, A + B

Haste
K, K ,K

Water Haste
K, K, tap down + K

Divine Punishment
Tap forward + A

Hurricane Punishment
Tap forward, hold forward + K

Rapid Destruction
Diag. down/forward + K, K, K

Punishing Strike
Tap down + K, K

Sealing Punishment
Diag. down/back + K

Water Kick
Back + K, K

Mat
Tap back, hold back + K, K

Rapid Destruction Alt
G + up (as you land) K, K, K

Haste Alt
G,tap up + K, K, K

Divine Cannon
(while standing) K

Sealing Punishment 2 Possession
Hold down, diag. down/forward + K, hold diag. down/back

Stalker
A + B

Stalker Lower
Tap down + A + B

Stalker Upper
Tap up + A+ B

Poison Dart
Hold down, diag. down/back + A + B

Advancing Cloud Scroll
A + K

Hurricane Punishment
Tap forward + A + K

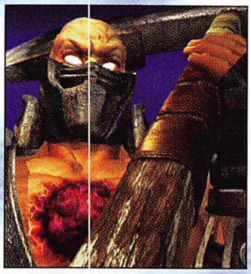
Cloud Scroll
Tap down or up, neutral, A + K

Storm Cloud Scroll
Tap down or up, neutral, A + K, A

Fog Blanket
Tap down A + K

Divine Cannon Combo
Hold down, A + K, K

Ninja Cannon
Tap back + B + K



Astaroth

Throws

Maelstrom Drive (front side)
G + A

Colossus (front side)
G + B

Titan Bomb (front side)
G + B, tap forward

Flight of the Wicked (front side)
G + B, tap back

Wrath of the Damned (in air)
G + B

Burial (downed opponent)
Tap down + A + B

Burial (downed opponent)
Tap down + B + K

Beat Down (left side)
G + A or G + B

ON Silent Wings (right side)
G + A or G + B
The Rack (back side)
G + A or G + B

Attacks

Annihilation
A, A

Destruction
A, B

Grip Shot
Tap forward + A

Grip Shot to Axe Volcano
Tap forward +A, B

Tornado Spike Feint
Tap forward, hold forward + A

Tornado Spike
Tap forward, hold forward + A, B

Vicious Circle
Tap diag. down/forward + A

Hades Break
Tap down + A

Discus
Tap diag. down/back + A

Hades Control
Tap back + A

Hades Divide
Tap back, hold back + A

Poseidon Tide
Tap down, diag. down/back + A, A, A, A, A

Jumping Hades Break
G + up (as you land) A

Decapitator
Tap up + A

Reverse Spiral Axe
(while standing) A

Bear Tamer
B, A

Bear Tamer Alternate
B, tap back + A

Great Divide
B, B

Axe Side Divide
B, B, tap forward

Axe Butt
B, tap forward

Axe Side Cannon
Tap forward, B

Axe Crash
Tap forward, hold forward + B

Axe Volcano
Tap diag. down/forward + B

Hades
Tap down + B

Axe Grave
Tap diag. down/back + B

Bear Fang
Tap back + B

Canyon Creation
Tap back, hold back + B

Falling Divide
G + up (as you land) B

Jumping Divide
Tap up + B

Hades Rising
(while standing) B

Bull Kick
K

Hades Knee
Tap forward + K

Bull rush
Tap forward hold forward + K

Dark Tamer
Tap diag. down/back + K, A

Bull Low Kick
Tap down + K

Hades Sweep
Tap diag. down/back + K

Command Kick
Tap back + K

Lower Command Kick
Tap back, hold back + K

Base Command Kick
G + up (as you land) K

Dive Kick
Tap up + K

Rising Cyclone
(while standing) K, A

Titan Axe
A + B

Titan Swing Right
Diag. down/forward + A + B

Tidal Wave
Tap back + A + B

Guard Crusher
B + K

Body Splash
Tap forward + B + K

Axe Lower Cannon
Tap diag. down/forward + B + K

Demented Moon
Tap down, diag. down/forward, forward + B + K

Advertiser's Index

Pokémon: The Next Generation

It's well known that Nintendo plans to bring its popular Pokémon franchise into the new millenium, and according to a well vested source in Japan, a Pokémon RPG that was original slated as a 64DD title, will now be one of the first launch titles available for the Dolphin. Can you say killer ap? I knew you could.

Game Boy Advanced Unveiled!

Nintendo of Japan recently announced the first official details regarding the upcoming sequel to the 80-million selling Game Boy. Simply called the 'Game Boy Advance', the 32-bit handheld will be a joint venture between Nintendo, Konami, and Mobile 21.

In addition to sporting a powerful 32-bit CPU, Game Boy Advance will be able to connect to a cellular phone (or a PHS phone in Japan) to access the Internet, thus allowing users to download game software, participate in multi-player games, chat and exchange E-Mail.

Adding communication features to a portable game system like the Game Boy is expected to result in new kinds of network entertainment. In effect, Game Boy Advance will be a personal communications terminal as well as a next generation handheld game system. Nintendo Co. Ltd. Chairman, Hiroshi Yamauchi, sees it as a way to explore new areas of multi-player gaming.

Mobile 21 will also develop software for Nintendo's next generation home system, code named 'Dolphin', which takes advantage of a hardware connection between Game Boy Advance and the home unit.

The retail price for the Game Boy Advance and its accessories has not yet been determined, although a mass-market price is expected. This cool-sounding handheld powerhouse is slated for an August 2000 release in Japan and is tentatively set to release before the end of 2000 in North America.

Here are some Preliminary Specs for Game Boy Advance straight from Nintendo:

- •CPU: Memory embedded 32-bit RISC CPU (CPU core design by ARM)
- •LCD: Reflective TFT Color LCD
- •Display Size: 40.8mm x 61.2mm
- •Resolution: 240 x 160 pixels
- •Maximum colors to be displayed simultaneously: 65,000
- •Size: Approximately Height 80mm / Width 135mm / Depth 25mm
- •Weight: Approximately 140g
- •Power Supply: 2 AA Alkaline batteries
- •Battery life: 20 hours continuous play
- •Launch date: August 2000 in Japan, Christmas 2000 in North America and Europe
- •Suggested Retail Price: To be announced

Project Dolphin's Release Date

When information on Nintendo's secretive Project Dolphin was released to the masses at E3, the Big 'N' projected a holiday 2000 release. Well, all is not well in Marioville and eager gamers dying to get their hands on the 256-bit super system may have to wait as long as Christmas 2001. The reason for the delay? Nintendo wants to wait till the PlayStation 2's details are fully revealed to make sure that they have the upper hand in the next console war.

Nintendo 64's 2000 Release List

With all of the hype surrounding the upcoming Project: Dolphin, the Nintendo 64's future library is slowly dwindling. Although next year will see some major releases such as Rare's sequel to *Banjo-Kazooie* and *Excitebike 64*, this Christmas may be the N64's last stand. It is even rumored that Nintendo's last first party game is already in production, *Zelda Gaiden*. Think about it, with dwindling 3rd party support, the N64 may quickly and quietly disappear just like the SNES did four short years ago... Bon voyage, 64—hello, Dolphin.

Resident Evil Zero

While *Resident Evil 2* may quench the thirst of some bloodthirsty Nintendo 64 owners, another secret *RE* title is currently in the works. Aptly named, *Resident Evil Zero*, the title will take place before the original Raccoon City massacre. As expected, everyone's favorite zombies will be making a return in the prequel, and a team member of the project has been overheard saying that quite a few mysteries of the series will be revealed in this Nintendo 64 exclusive. Summer is the target date for the game.

The Ultimate Dreamcast Add On: DVD

In retaliation to Nintendo and Sony's DVD announcements, Sega has reportedly decided to one-up the competition and include movie playback with their upcoming DVD add-on. The peripheral is rumored to also add more RAM and will somehow increase the DC's polygon pushing capabilities. Of course, with a new piece of hardware Sega will need a few must-buy games to get gamers excited, and early reports indicate that a brand new *Sonic* game will be unveiled especially for the platform. Could this be the hardware and software combination that puts Sega back on top in Japan?

Working Designs Back in the Sack with Sega?

After Bernie Stolar's recent departure from Sega of America, Working Designs' cold shoulder attitude towards Sega has slowly melted away. Although no official announcements have been made, WD is rumored to be jumping on the Dreamcast bandwagon in a big way! Not only will upcoming Game Arts' projects be localized for the U.S. DC, word is that Vic and co. will be bringing out some unexpected, already-released import titles such as *Puyo Puyo*. It's all about *Grandia 2* baby!

Lost World a Reality?

The insanely popular Model 3 shooter, *Jurassic Park: Lost World* has recently been spotted lurking about SoJ's Headquarters! Knowing that gamers are desperate for another shoot-'em-up after the incredible *House of Dead 2*, Sega is putting the finishing touches on the port of this Dino-killing quarter muncher. A rumored Model 3 collection will follow *LW's* debut, with *Daytona 2* and *Scud Racer* waiting in the wings.

The Two Sides of SNK Vs Capcom

The much-anticipated two-dimensional fighting romp known as *SNK Vs Capcom* may actually become two separate arcade cabinets. Capcom of Japan has recently listed both a SNK and Capcom version of the title. Capcom is also planning a version of the game for the Dreamcast, and it's rumored that this will be the first 2D brawler to use the NAOMI board.

Lara Venturing Off to Other Platforms?

Recently voted the pop icon of the '90s, Lara Croft may just be leaving the Sony camp for greener pastures. Sony's exclusive agreement with that star's publisher will reportedly expire in November. Lara's last PlayStation adventure will ironically be called *Tomb Raider 4: The Last*

Revelation. While a Nintendo 64 Lara sounds enticing, the real deal will be when we see the diva on the 128-bit Dreamcast. Woo hoo!

Tenchu Madness

Lara may be skipping town on her PlayStation brethren, but the ninja-stealth title *Tenchu* will remain a Sony exclusive. With *Tenchu 2* already in the works, you would think fans of the original would have enough to get excited about. Well, a representative from Sony of Japan recently commented that a PlayStation 2 version of the game is already in its early planning stages. In fact, if all goes well, the PS 2 rendition could become the first party launch title Sony has been looking for (next to *Gran Turismo* of course).

SNK's New Home System?!

Although SNK's sales of the Neo Geo Pocket have been brisk in Japan, there are rumblings that SNK is thinking about bring out a brand new home system in the Land of the Rising Sun. It seems that SNK has been looking for a new successor to its Neo Geo 64 board, and if all goes well their next big arcade quarter muncher will go on sale for consumer use possibly by the summer of 2000.

Dead or Alive 2 Testing in the US

Word from the windy city indicates that *Dead or Alive 2,* Temco's unbelievably good-looking fighter, is on test at an arcade in Niles, IL. Unfortunately, this is the only known US test location—so all of us West Coast gamers will have to wait a little bit longer to get our hands on this Naomi-based fighter.

Team Ninja, developers of Temco's *Dead or Alive 2,* has commented that it would like to see an enhanced version of *DoA2* for the PlayStation 2. The NAOMI-based masterpiece has yet to be confirmed for the Dreamcast, although a quick and easy port is expected before the New Year. Team Ninja is also working on a PlayStation 2 version of the arcade classic, *Ninja Gaiden.* Versions of *Dead or Alive 2* and *Ninja Gaiden* for the PlayStation 2 should be playable at next year's E3.

Gran Turismo 2 PlayStation 2 Bound?

While *Gran Turismo 2* may already have a December 7th release date on the original PlayStation, it is rumored that a PlayStation 2 version of the game will be a launch title for the super system. Sporting a few new tracks and higher polygonal count, *GT2* for the PlayStation 2 should make its first appearance at the Tokyo Game Show.

King of Fighters DC: Part Deuce

SNK is close to completion on an all-new incarnation of their favorite son for the Dreamcast. Named *King Of Fighters Adventure,* this new title will be a 3-D action/adventure and you can expect to link up to your Neo Geo Pocket Color. The game will be released in March of 2000.

Let's Get Ready to Wrassle...

Rumors are flying around the net that Midway's next big game will be *Ready to Rumble: Wrestling.* Best described as a *Blitz* or *Jam* of the wrestling world, *R2R:W* will use over exaggerated characters and moves to entice action hungry US gamers. What's next? *Ready to Rumble: Square Dancing*? Let's get ready to shuffle!

Nintendo's New 'Maker' Titles

Perhaps the most delayed piece of hardware in Video Game history, the 64DD, was showcased at Nintendo SpaceWorld Show in Japan. So far the flagship titles for the add-on look to be the upcoming 'Maker' Series (Polygon Maker, Talent Studio, Paint Studio) and Nintendo has just announced four new, very similar titles.

Sound Maker — Not a whole lot is known about this one. Expect a similar experience to the original *Mario Paint* music maker, but with more detail.

Video Jockey Maker — Presumably similar to the Make your Own Music Video for the Sega CD, it looks to be Nintendo's answer to the recent "interactive music" genre craze that has recently swept Japan.

Graphical Message Maker — Details are even sparser on this title. Perhaps a text program to go along with the Paint Studio disk?

Game Maker — The big enchilada! I'm sure we've all had the secret passion to create our own video game at one point in time and Nintendo will soon make that wish a reality. Suddenly, the polygon and talent studio programs have a purpose!

The Last Saturn Title?

Capcom has confirmed that their last game for the deceased Saturn will be *Final Fight Revenge,* a sequel to the old school 2-D brawler. Once planned as a Titan STV arcade title, *FFR* was scoffed at by beta testers and sent back to the drawing board quite a while back. Instead of canceling the project altogether, Capcom recently decided to save face and give the Saturn one last dance. A Dreamcast version is also planned, and both games should arrive sometime early in the New Year.



The HGA – Home Game Arcade system

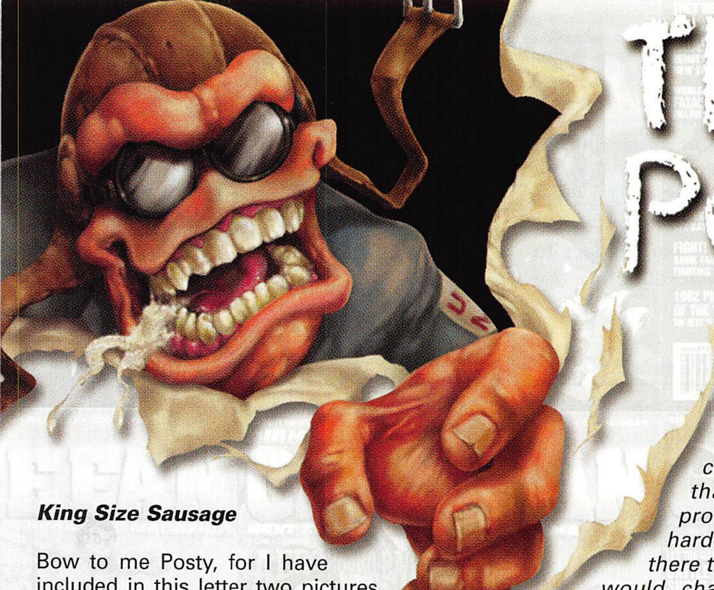
Despite the fun to be had at arcades, very few gamers actually buy arcade games. This is because most people don't want to spend the money on a cabinet or don't have room for said cabinet. While a few companies have tried filling this void by selling home arcade units, most have been unsuccessful because they weren't given proper exposure. These home arcade units were called "Super Guns," and as the origins of the name have been lost with time, the companies that manufactured them are just as obscure. Well, a Pacific Northwest company called Great Western Trading, specializing in arcade parts and accessories, will soon be marketing a new Super Gun tentatively titled the HGA. And while our prototype still needs a few changes, the cost of the system, combined with its exciting new features, make it an item that all hard-core arcade gamers should possess.

If you've seen a Super Gun before, then you'll know what to expect with the HGA. The package is made up of two joystick units, a power supply, and the JAMMA wiring. The preliminary designs are a bit tacky but will change before the final version. There's even two audio/video outputs, so versus games can be played on two separate monitors!



Since this is a very early version, some gripes are expected. First off, the color setting options aren't fully implemented. In fact, there's only one knob that performs a general color switch from black to white. Secondly, the signal to the TV isn't very good and definitely needs some tweaking. The joysticks themselves are pretty good, but the buttons need work. They feel way too stiff, and your fingers will be hurting after several minutes.

Still, the HGA shows much promise. S-Video and RGB output are in the planning stages. And after having a long talk with the designers at GW, they're now planning to make changes to the joystick, add more color adjustments, and feature NAOMI compatibility. And with Super Guns being few and far between, the HGA is the easiest way of getting the true arcade experience at home, without the bulky cabinets.



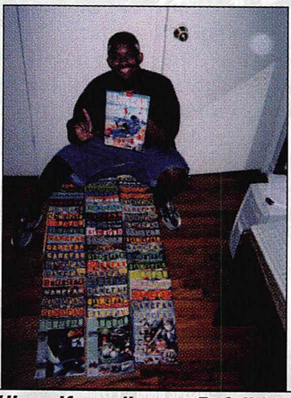
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King Size Sausage

Bow to me Posty, for I have included in this letter two pictures that prove to you and the rest of the video game magazine world why I'm the #1 die-hard game fan! I have been with you since Volume 1, Issue 6, May '93! The issue that I'm holding in my hands is over six years old, man! All flattery aside, I should ask you to please answer the most sophisticated letter you have ever received.

Rafail Pimentil
New York, NY



Himself a collector, Rafail has become part of the collection for others to collect. Whoa, that's deep...

My friend, your blistering assault of questions for the vault of gaming wisdom fell upon near-blinded eyes... it has been a great many years since these ocular cavities have borne witness to such fervent dedication to the art of Post-Fu (the lack of light down here in my cavernous abode doesn't exactly improve ye olde eyesight, either...). You are to be commended for your diligent collection of our monthly tomes of wisdom!

However, your dedication is exceeded only by the unbridled assault of questions you sent along, to be asked of the wisened sage seated upon the Postal Peaks of the mountain of gaming knowledge. So numerous were your questions, in fact, that it would be impossible for me to answer them within these small, printed pages, and yet also gift other Post-Fu acolytes who've mailed this month with the knowledge they seek. Powerful though he may be, Posty is but one man—and there's only so much of me to go around!

Therefore, let your mind be eased by the publication of your photograph, and let the word be spread to the four corners of Posty-dom that this man has proven his might as a hard-core GameFan. Are there those among you who would challenge him for the crown? Let your voices be heard, and your photographs seen... send them to my attention here at the caves below GameFan's offices and perhaps you, too can lay claim to the proud "sausage" heritage that is rightfully yours!

P.S.—You are absolutely correct in your most astute observation... I do deserve a raise from the paltry $5/month I'm currently being paid (and you don't even want to know what that amounts to after taxes). Are you listening, ECM?

Sega Dreamcast: Now In Chocolate!

I took apart my import Dreamcast and crushed all the chips. I then mixed them with chocolate ice-cream and blended them together. I served it in the empty shell of my DC with *Sonic Adventure* as a garnish.

My Choco-Dreamcast-chip-sundae tasted great!!!! And as a side effect I can now see in 1.5 million polygons and everything moves at 60 frames per-second. I am also completely aware of its internal bit-ness. It's not a 128-bit machine. Not really. But man does it go down smooth!!!

Bit-O-Sega
Via the Internet

Now here's a man who really gives new meaning to the phrase "devouring games!" I feel your pain though, my friend—there are days when the only things left in my 'edible' stash of frozen foods are Lima Beans and Chicken Livers. What black thoughts drove me to purchase these, the world may never know... and perhaps it's best that way. On these dark days, the tastefully-designed components in my entertainment center start looking decidedly delectable, and the temptation to try glazing them with barbecue sauce becomes oh-so difficult to ignore. However, unlike our friend here, I've never bowed to these strange and unnatural impulses.

Don't get me wrong: A Dreamcast and Sonic Adventure *are definitely a tasty dish, but heed the words of the Postmeister... the best way to ingest Sega's newest console is through the eyes and ears. You'll find the DC far more satisfying if you're able to play all the other titles coming down the pike—trust me. Now put down the ketchup...*

SNK's Lighting A Fire In His Pocket

Hey, oh almighty Post-Fu! I just noticed that one of my questions was answered in the August issue of GF (Will Akira Toriyama do the character designs for *CT*?). Well, I don't think you actually answered the question 'cuz of little old me (or did you?), but hey, it's nice to think so... Well, on to my rant! Just a few questions about the future of gaming...

1. Can the NGP do special effects such as scaling?

2. Have there been any confirmations on the 'PlayStation 2' being able to play DVD?

3. Do you think that the NGP will be at least a somewhat hit like the GB and the GBC?

4. Are there going to be any higher capacity memory cards for the DC?

5. I heard something about a *Lunar 3* at this crappy little site I found. What have you heard?

Hey, yo, any answer is fine with me! Just a little something will do! Even a little letter to blow me off will be fine (except the hate mail you will get afterward, err... I didn't say that)! Just something!

Sam Deats
Via the Internet

Because I know all and I see all in the world of video games, it is very possible that I knew you wanted your question about Toriyama-san answered, and therefore did so in my trademark fashion. However, it's more likely that since there are a lot of people who dig his art and want to see more of it, I answered it for that reason. You may select the answer that most strokes your ego, as I proceed to answer your various and sundry questions. However, know that the last man who sent me hate mail was on the receiving end of the most devastating maneuver known in the world of video gaming, a swift and powerful S.T.B. (Steel Toed Boot, for the funky)... so choose your words carefully!

1. Only if the developers of a game are clever—the Lynx, this ain't. Read and understand... the NeoGeo Pocket Color is not a handheld to be sold based on gimmickry or bullet points—it's all about serving up restaurant-quality gaming.

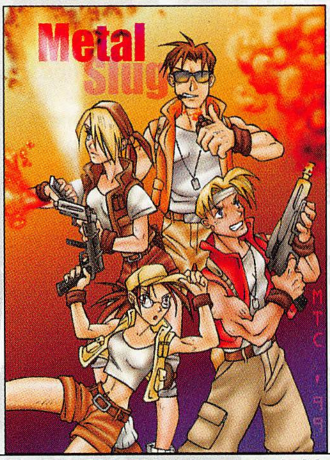
2. Sony has said that the PlayStation 2 will not come with the ability to play DVD movies, even if the format they've chosen for

games is DVD-based. This means the PS2 will be missing the hardware necessary to decode the highly-compressed video streams of a standard DVD movie disc. This is a revelation which made resident A/V maven and online Editorial Manager, Hi-Fi, weep openly. Alas, there is no sympathetic shoulder at GameFan for a man whose only love in life is technology...

3. The only chance the NGPC has of being a hit is for gamers to go out and play it. If you love portable gaming and you give this little portable funbox a try, you're going to want to take it home. That's all the participation SNK's gonna need from you, in order to make the magic happen!

4. Even though Sega hasn't announced any, it didn't take long for all kinds of high-capacity memory cards to start popping out of the woodwork for the PlayStation... so I fully expect the ever-inventive peripheral manufacturers to come up with something for the DC in short order!

5. Don't look at me, I heard that site was pretty crappy, too...



Marian Churchland e-mailed this entry at the last moment. One of my favorite games, but no Posty in sight!

Dreamcast? Consider Him Sold...

Dear courier to the gods,

Seems like every electronics store (EB, Software Etc, and so on) has an employee saying not to buy a Dreamcast, wait for the PS2.

1. I like Sega and their games, they finally have a system capable of making exact Model 3 ports & bringing them into our homes.

2. Some younger people in America have only one parent who just can't afford to spend $800-$1,500 on a computer for their children who want to surf the net, etc. Sega has addressed this problem perfectly. Affordable, powerful & tons of software. Not too shabby, if you asked me. The PS2 will probably be technically superior to the DC, but it will also probably be a long time before you see a DVD-based game on the machine.

3. What will the price of such a machine be? Even then, Sony's not talking about building-in a modem!

4. DVD ROM-based games, as opposed to CD-based will be much more expensive, but how much? $20-$30 more won't fly in the States no matter WHAT system they're on. I really don't care about Sega's mistakes in the past (even though Sega CD & Saturn burnt me), they are giving me a reason to believe one last time. Vaporware doesn't concern me, what does is what's here, in the now. I'm not trying to bash Sony or Nintendo's next-gen systems because I will own all three. Sega may not be #1, but with access to the Internet for the average Joe, that gives DC owners a reason to never put that system in the closet.

David Middleton
Zephyr Hills, FL

Ahh, acolyte David Middleton from Zephyr Hills, Florida... do not allow these rogue members of the retail public to cloud your mind with their own misplaced and ill-informed opinions! Turn your thoughts within, through the power of Post-Fu meditation techniques and ask your inner gamer what he most desires. He is your friend... get to know him. He's lonely.

It's clear that you hear him calling out, because you've just listed off a variety of great reasons to play games in the here and now, rather than waiting to embrace an unknown future. You shouldn't count the PlayStation 2 out, because Sony clearly has the muscle and support to get the job done. However, there just isn't a lot to talk about in the way of games for that system... in fact, there aren't even any for us to get hands-on with yet! Meanwhile, we've been happily playing away on our DCs for very close to a year now, and as you read this, the American launch will have already doused US gamers in a flood of Dreamcast products. You will all be seeing, first-hand, just how good we've been saying this system is for the past year or so.

What lesson have we learned today? You must listen to your inner gamer... he is your best friend in the world. Ignore outside influences, and do not let your opinion be swayed by salespeople. GameFan's editors are all firmly in touch with their inner gamers, and commune with them on a daily basis. Some (like ECM) even let their inner gamer run their daily lives... and though I cannot recommend taking it that far (although eBay thanks him for it) the entire editorial staff of GameFan suggests you place the call. Trust me, it'll make you a better person, and a better game player. Oh, and tell him I said 'Hi'... it's been too long!

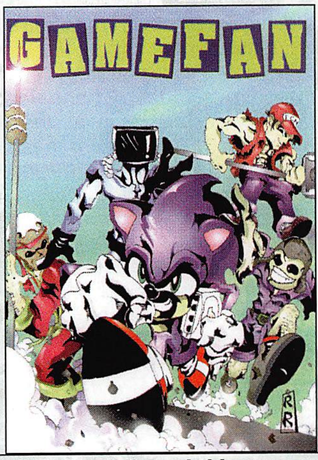
Will Square Swim With The Dolphin?

Yo Mista Postmeister fella, I have a burning question I have to ask, and since I know that nothing happens in the gaming world without you knowing of it, then I know you would be able to come up with a definite answer. Ok, Ok here's my question: I heard that Square was looking into developing games for the Dolphin, do you know if this is true? is Square planning on reuniting with Nintendo? If so, the gaming gods (including you... no matter what anybody says) have surely smiled down upon us lowly (mortal) gamers. Thanks for your time, oh honorable master of Post-Fu!

Smack_321
Via the Internet

As you have so rightly pointed out, nothing in the world of gaming is beyond my notice. Every broken controller, every game reset in frustration, every new player who buys a console expecting a few laughs, who instead finds the hardcore within them awakened... It is the Postmeister who sees and chronicles all of them. For that reason, I will reveal the unspoken truth: Square is enjoying the deep, dark, lint-filled depths of Sony's pockets so much that you can fully expect the next console they develop for to be the PlayStation 2... and with Square's track record, they won't be doing any "extracurricular" development.

As history dictates, Square is a one-console show, and it looks like they're fully on the Sony bandwagon. Whether Square will ever return to the golden fields of Nintendo from whence they came, I cannot say... but with each multiple million-seller they release for the PlayStation in America, the lower the likelihood becomes that they'll jump ship and side with the 'Big N'. Sorry to rain on your parade, junior—like it or not, it's all about the dollar signs for most of these companies...



Bob Reilly delivered this very cool entry, a cover featuring his favorite GF Editors. Close, man... REAL close!

How Long Before Bits Don't Matter?

Yo Posty! Long time reader, first time writer (sorry, I just had to say that). It is no mystery that the Dreamcast is going to be heads and tails above the current crop of video game systems. It is also no secret that the next generation PSX and Dolphin are supposedly going to blow the Dreamcast away (graphically anyway). But I've been wondering, will we really be able to tell a difference between the Dreamcast and Playstation 2 and/or Dolphin?

Think about it; the Dreamcast has the ability to do anything the developer wants it to do. It's not limited by RAM, polygon ability, amount of colors, or anything else. Now, isn't it conceivable that we have seen the limits of what are TVs can do with the

Dreamcast? Is the next big graphical leap HDTV? Or do you really think that the PlayStation 2 and/or Dolphin will be better on our current TVs than the Dreamcast?

Sincerely,

Technologically Baffled Jason
Via the Internet

Banishing the bafflement of GameFan's readership is what Postmeister is all about, so you've come to the right place! Jason makes an interesting point in his first missive to the Man with the Plan and I thought I'd pass it on, to provoke thought in the thousands upon thousands of dedicated Post-Fu students around the world. As video game systems grow more and more advanced, and their shattering graphical brilliance breaches the boundaries between real life and fantasy, what point will there be in having a choice between game consoles? Perhaps the day is rapidly approaching where we, as gamers, can unite behind one mantra: "It's about the games, freak-boy!"

To this point, system advocates have clogged my mailbox with raging caps-lock abuse, claiming their chosen console was the only one to own. But when game systems no longer have any real differences in performance, what will the selling point be, if not the games? Could the day of our salvation be nigh? Or are we doomed to the constant treadmill of hardware upgrades, endlessly walking, never reaching our destination?

I have worn myself out by pondering such impossibilities... in the here and now, each system has different strengths and weaknesses; each dependant on the manufacturer in question. Eventually, the day will come when a video game machine transcends all of this, and offers gamers everything we have ever dreamed of... but that day has not yet arrived. For that reason, my tireless work cannot yet be abandoned. Perhaps on the day of my election to the Presidency of the United States, I can dedicate all of the world's engineering talent to creating just such a machine. So remember, Posty-fans... your vote counts!

Suggestions For Beating The Heat

Dear Great Posty,

I have came to seek your never-ending wisdom. I would like to ask a question regarding ventilation of a Dreamcast. Ok, I have this wild idea, what if you took a drink refrigerator (you know the small ones that you put, like, Coke cans in!) and put a Dreamcast in it. Then to fit the controllers and the AV cables you could drill holes in the front and back. Would this kill the system or, would it run faster because it is cooler??

Steven
Via the Internet

You clearly know all too well what an expert in the refrigeration sciences I have come to be, after embracing my obsession with frozen foods. So who better than yours truly to answer such an off-the-wall question with a straight face? While others might laugh in your face and discard such an insane concept as sheer folly, it is only the Postmeister who will give pause for thought on the subject of proper console cooling.

Many PlayStation owners are already aware of the different gadgets that were devised as attachments to Sony's heat-sensitive console, and their complete and utter failure on the sales floors of video game retailers. Not enough gamers take the issue of system cooling seriously, and Steven has demonstrated just how much he loves his Dreamcast. So much so, in fact, that he would risk public embarrassment and humiliation to investigate this oft-neglected aspect of console care and feeding. You are to be commended, Steven!

However, the verbal blueprint you've just given me is what we in the refrigeration business like to call 'overkill'. Why waste a perfectly good fridge, which you could be using to store Pepsi, waffle chips and thawed frozen goods of various kinds, a fridge completely devoid of canned meat's foul scourge? Listen, all the Dreamcast requires is plenty of ventilation in order to stay healthy... putting the thing in a refrigerator won't damage it, but it won't help it run any faster, either!



Jon Allegrezza won the backpack with his unique take on the GF staff, in addition to last month's very cool Super Sonic art!

To Prevent Your PS From Stuttering...

I'm really upset at Sony, and I wonder if you know of more cases like mine. I play games at least six out of seven days a week, which might be too much. After about a year of owning my first PlayStation, it would lock up and thrash textures if I didn't turn it upside down. Now, years later, my second PlayStation is behaving the same way, and I can see it's imminent destruction lumbering over the horizon like that Jawa thing in *Star Wars*. Do you, in all your grandiose, seething knowledge, have any experience in this upside-down PlayStation phenomena? I personally think it's how Sony keeps sales up (you got forty games... what else can you do?). Thank GOD DC is coming out next week. My Saturn never does crap like this. Thanks for any help.

ZOD
Via the Internet

The beast whose name I dare not speak has reared its ugly head! Right after discussing the proper cooling of consoles with our close, personal friend Steven, I've got the mighty ZOD confronting me with perhaps the biggest problem to plague console owners since the original NES' goofy, ultra-finicky cartridge slot! Fortunately, I have the answer to your desperate plea for info... it just isn't one you're gonna like.

The bulk of the PlayStation machines currently in gamers' hands hop, skip and jump around most game discs on the market... sometimes refusing to play entirely! The reasons offered by Sony have been many and varied... overheating, bad CD-Rom readers or CD-Rom readers that eventually GO bad, scratched game discs, and the list goes on. However, PlayStation machines purchased within the last year or so work flawlessly—no problems at all.

Is it a conspiracy? Are there black helicopters hovering above your house as you tilt your PlayStation sideways just to get the CG in Final Fantasy *to play back without skipping? Will special Sony operatives pay you a little "visit" if you don't unplug your system between game playing sessions? I cannot say—I value my life. However, short of buying another PlayStation, you're just going to have to live with this ugly little hardware quirk—it's been part of the lives of PS gamers since day one. Rest assured, ZOD... you are not alone.*

Well, the Dreamcast backpack contest has come and gone, and I have selected the winner of this very cool item. Jon Allegrezza's artwork graced last month's column with an ultra-cool "Phoenix Rising" Super Sonic image, and this month he checked in with the winning image... a humorous take on the GameFan staff (complete with yours truly), featuring the golden Hedgehog.

There were plenty of other submissions, the best of which have graced these pages over the last couple of issues. I want to thank everyone who entered the contest for all of their hard work. Even if your artwork didn't make it into the magazine, rest assured that it's being put to very good use. My cave badly needed a little re-decoration, and these submissions are doing the trick very nicely as custom wallpaper!

So, congratulations Jon... the backpack is on its way. Don't let the end of the contest be the end of the art though, folks! GameFan is a great way to get your stuff noticed, so all you aspiring Picassos, brandish those brushes and let's see what you've got! See you next month...

—Posty


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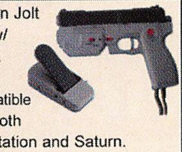
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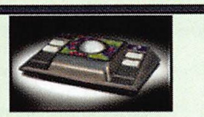
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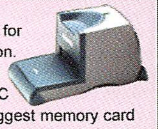
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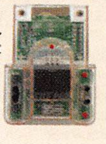
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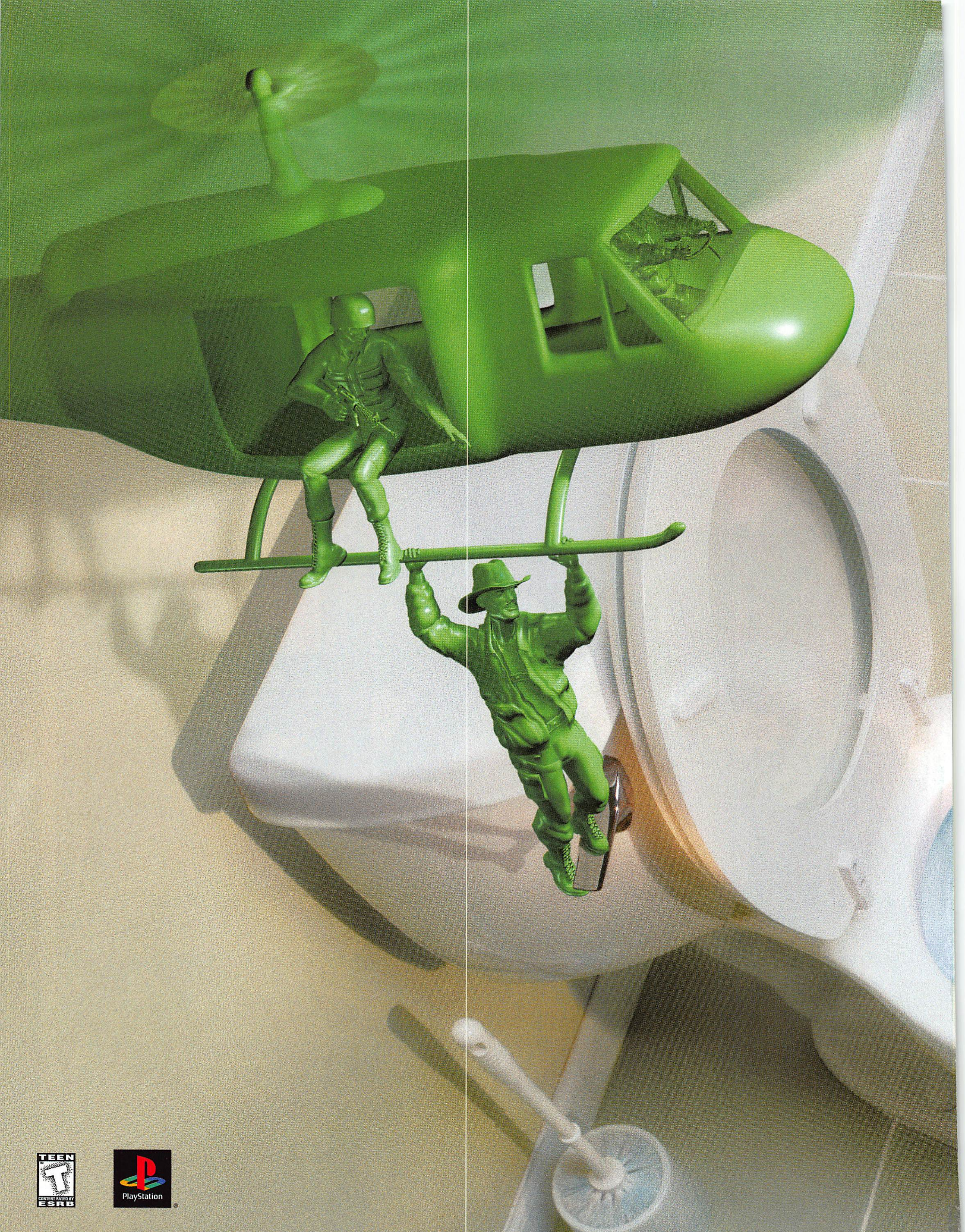
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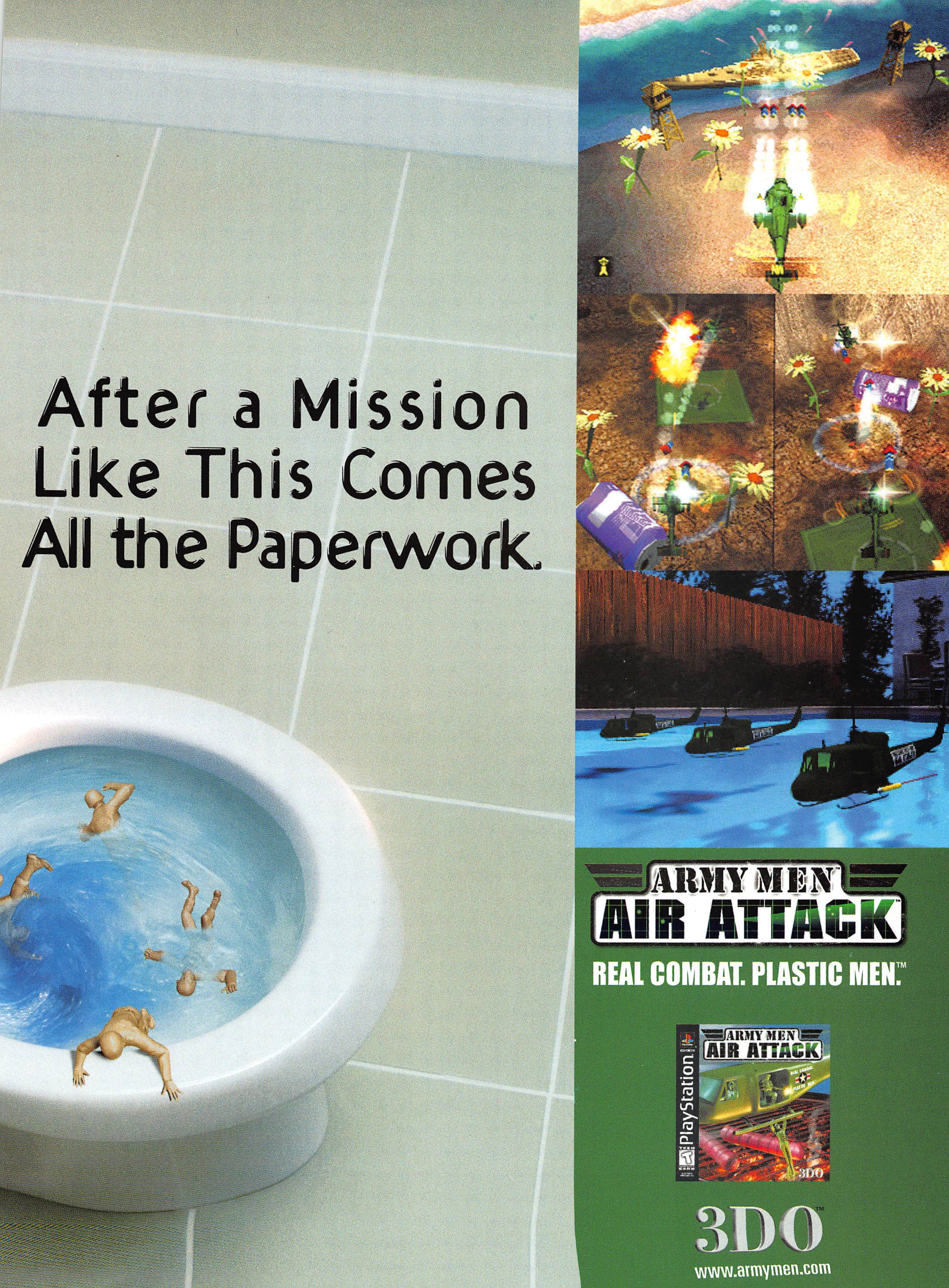
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